Contextual determinants of political modernization in tribal Middle Eastern societies: the case of unified Yemen

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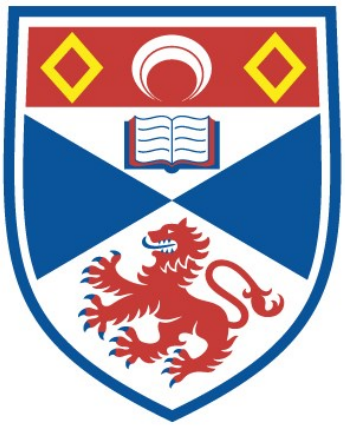

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This research is a reaction to the post September 11 internationalization of the question of modernization in the Arab Middle East, and a response to the literature on the assumed link between the level of modernization in the Arab world and transnational violence against the western world. From the perspective of this literature, the rigid socio-cultural and political traditionalism of Arab societies breeds militant Islamism and prevents the waves of democracy from reaching the shores of Arab countries. Fukuyama (2001), for instance, commented on the assumed link between modernity, religion and the attacks of September 11: "Modernity has a cultural basis. It is not an accident that modern liberal democracy emerged in the Christian West, since the universalism of democratic rights can be seen as a secular form of Christian universalism". This line of argument overlaps with another, in which the attacks of September 11 were manifestations of the failure of political modernization in the Arab/Muslim world. Lewis (2005), for instance, notes that since the Second World War, and after the arrival of the Soviets, the Arab Middle East has basically imported three European models of rule: fascist, Nazi, and communist, and because these imported political projects were planted into a traditional local landscape, political modernization was a very difficult mission to accomplish in the region. According to Lewis (2002), instead of increasing political freedom, the process of modernization in the Arab Middle East has reinforced autocracy.

However, insofar as traditionalism and modernity coexists the world over, the assumed clash between two rigidly separate worlds of modernity and traditionalism is illusory. In any case, it is the social injustice and the brutal inequality of globalization that traditional societies reject. As Fred Halliday (2004) points out, modernity and globalization have themselves led to radicalization, rather than the lack of these. The post September 11 argumentations of Washington-based neoconservatism rely, as Mamdani (2004) notes, on a sharp distinction between modern and pre-modern societies, and either equate pre-modern with not-yet modern

and therefore lagging behind, or anti-modern and thus likely to produce fear and pre-emptive police or military action.

In my view, if we are to assess the path of modernization and its social, economic and political consequences in the Arab Middle East, we need first of all to abandon the post September 11 popular reduction of the Arab/Muslim world into one socio-political community that fanatically rejects modernity and modernization. Secondly, we need to take into consideration that 'Westernization' is not 'modernization'. The former is a set of Western attributes of social organization that shape the way of living, behaving and thinking. The latter, on the other hand, is a process of technological, economic and political development. Second, in the modern history of the Arab Middle East, the consequences of modernization followed from the expansion of exploitive imperial colonialism, and from Arab elite interaction with Europeans in the salons of Arabophile British and French expatriates (Hourani, 1983). Finally, modernization is a mega socio-economic and political project, which does not come instantly.

With the above-mentioned notes in mind, this research digs into the archaeology of the process of political modernization (PPM) in Arab political systems, focusing on those that govern ancient, fragmented and tribal societies. My choice of Yemen as the microcosm of such systems is based on the following reasons:

1) It is the most traditional, weakest and least developed Arab state.
2) It is the first independent Arab state.
3) With the exception of the coastal city-state of Aden, Yemen is one of the few third world states not to fall under European colonial rule. It did not inherit, therefore, colonial burecratic establishment
4) It is one of the most fertile Middle Eastern terrains from which to address the interaction between a republican-based political system and tribalism, and the impact of such interaction on the PPM.
5) Compared to other Arab states, Yemen scores very low at every Development Index. At democracy level, however, Yemen allows party pluralism (ta' addudiyya), and freedom of expression that are not found in many parts of the region.

6) Although it is run by an army officer, Yemen is not a military dictatorship.

7) United Yemen is the youngest Arab state, which was born out of the breakup of the USSR.

8) United Yemen, or the Republic of Yemen (ROY), is a unique fusion of two poor countries that had completely opposite political orientations- it was a unification of the only existing Marxist Arab state (PDRY) and the most tribal and conservative Arab state (YAR).

9) Yemen is an excellent case for studying the regional and international factors in shaping state-society relations in the Arab Middle East. For instance, the Saudi role in funding Yemeni tribes, and the British experiment to build federation in the southern part of Yemen.

My choice of tribal Arab societies, on the other hand, is made for several reasons, the first of which is that in such societies; the dilemma of state formation/building in the Arab world is very prominent. Second, within these societies there are obvious contradictions between tribal, regional and national identities, each of these identities requires loyalties of its members, each represents alternative institutions of power and social control, and each enables actors to create not only overlapping social meanings but also multiple vehicles for political and economic demands. Third, in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, a plethora of journalistic reports, policy and strategic papers highlight an intimate relationship between tribalism, authoritarianism and terrorism. The hostile attitude toward tribalism in the region has been further intensified following the disastrous failure of the US geopolitical project in Iraq.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

By all conventional measurements of modernization and development, from communication and education to bureaucracy and urbanization, Arab societies have been undergoing an impressive transformation. There is, however, a wide gap in the Arab Middle East between such a transformation and the political consequences of modernization. In other words, the Arab Middle East exhibits a sharp contrast between its societal and political progress. In the case of Yemen, such a gap looks different from the one that exists in the rest of the region. In addition to being a country with the weakest and most limited bureaucracy in the Arab world,

Yemen has, also, the lowest level of urbanization and education in the region. According to United Nations Human Development Report for the year 2004, 73.7 % of Yemen's population are living in rural areas, and the country has a combined gross enrolment rate for primary, secondary and tertiary schools of 43%. In 2008, Yemen was rated near the bottom of the Human Development Index (HDI) by the UNDP; as number 153rd out of the 177 countries with HDI data, and it ranked as number 82 out of 108 countries in the Human Poverty Index. The United Nations Human Development Report 2006, for instance, indicates that the percentage of Yemeni population who live below National Poverty Line is 41.8%. Yet, Yemen is more democratic than most countries in the Arab Middle East. In light of this paradox, the following central question guides this research: which contextual factors are central in explaining the unique process of political modernization in tribal Yemen?

1.2 The Theoretical Approach to the Study

Despite the difficulty in pinning down the process of political modernization (PPM) in a neat definition, the PPM can be defined as a multifaceted transformative process that includes the elements of nationalism, institutionalization, participation, specialized government structures, urbanization, secularization and social mobility. This PPM-associated transformation takes place within the political domain of society. A domain that is occupied by different political, social and economic interest groups who produce, share and distribute resources and power. Theoretically, the conceptualization of the transformative nature of the PPM passed through three post Second World War phases: early modernization (1940s-60s), anti-modernization (1960s-70s) and late or reflexive modernization (1990s-). Each of the three phases is distinguished by its specific dominant discourse regarding state-society relations and mode of governance. In a nutshell, the traits of the early modernization phase were characterised by romantic optimism about progress in the developing world through the application of what Parsons (1966) called the process of 'adaptive upgrading', which include, amongst others, democratization via law, and economic

growth via industrialization. This view regards the state as a power container that has the authority to allocate, steer and solve societal problems by comprehensive planning and rationality-based policy making (Arts & Van Totenhove, 2003). In contrast, the anti-Westernization phase, or 'heroic radicalism', as Alexander (1995) put it, refers to the discourse that was launched by social movements and authors who articulated their scepticism about the paradigms of the early modernization school, particularly its teleological dimension that was contradicted by real-world events of poverty, famine, dictatorship, the North-South inequality and inequity and its neglect of the impact of external forces on domestic political decisions. Against this critical revision, ideas of the early phase about the evolving patterns of industrial relations in the developing world were replaced with class and bottom-up empowerment discourses, and functional theories were displaced by conflict ones. Moore (1966), for instance, proposed the replacement of 'modernization' and 'evolution' with 'revolution' and 'counter-revolution'. Mann (1973), on the other hand, replaced the discussions of the early modernization school about stratification and mobility with a discourse about exploitation. Finally, there is the late or reflexive modernization school, whereby development and progress is structured by global risks. The pivot of governance, according to this school, is the emergence of 'risk society', which leads to the increasing politicization of various groups in society, and the decreasing role of the state as the main and central political actor (Beck, Giddens, Lash, 1994). This school adopts the so called neo-liberal anti-Statist approach, which rests on the assumption that forces of globalization create multidimensional pressures on state-society relations, which in turn demand a new post-Keynesian economic orthodoxy that sidelines the state in favour of the private sector. A number of scholars have discredited this school. For instance, Hirst and Thompson (1996) argue that globalization has reconstituted, rather than diminished, the sovereignty of nation states. Mann (1977), on the other hand, argues that forces of globalization have given more power to Western capitalist states. The anti-Statist approach can be also criticized for placing much emphasis on

promoting electoral democracy that fails to empower voiceless, disadvantaged and oppressed communities.

Against this theoretical background, the field of studying political modernization in the Middle East, during the last two decades, made great advances in the areas of democratization, state building, state-society relations and civil society. This research attempts to present the case of the Yemeni state as an example of an Arab political system where tradition is vitally alive side by side in juxtaposition with various types of political modernization. Inspired by 'Revised Modernization Theory', this research exposes the foundations of the modern Yemeni state, highlights the role of the tribe in shaping the PPM, explores the emergence of the post unification's party pluralism within a tribal context, and investigates the role of the military-tribal network in the Yemeni PPM.

1.3 Objectives, Methodology and Contribution of the Study

The main objectives of this research are to de-emphasize the negative impact of tradition on the PPM, and to highlight the significance of the interactions at the regional and international levels on shaping the relations of the Yemeni state with tribalism and democracy. To achieve these objectives, the research adopts the "revised modernization theory" approach, which takes account of tradition. The approach fits with the idea that there is no uniform linear modernization process; that "tradition", in the form of tribalism and religion, is not incompatible with socio-economic advances. In this sense, the process of political modernization in traditional tribal Middle Eastern societies tends to be hybrid on tradition and modernity. Voluntary civic life in the Middle East, for instance, is often deformed not by traditional forces but by regimes' efforts at cooptation. As Khoury & Kostiner (1990) demonstrate, an encounter between the state and tribe in the region, almost always results in either endangering the very existence of the tribe or in distorting the character and important functions of the tribe. In the case of Yemen, as this

research demonstrates, tribes have adjusted themselves to the modern political structure of the state through a process of mutual learning. Carapico (1998), for instance, refers to the example of the commerce-based Hodeida city, where "modern" rationality of city governance emerged out of a "traditional" base rather than in opposition to it. Yemen is, indeed, a revealing example of 'flexible tribalism' in which the tribe functions as a non-governmental voluntary organization, with tribal solidarity being shared with other forms of civic association, such as political parties. In many ways, Yemen exemplifies the path that has so far been most suitable for the maturation of the civic traditions of tribalism into the fabric of modernization.

By investigating the impact of the interactions of national, regional and international contexts on state-tribe-democracy-military relations in Yemen, this research will illustrate how 'tradition' can be an agent of something rather "modern" such as political activism, participation and party pluralism. My choice of this approach is based on my conviction that contextualization of political trajectories transcends the simplistic and essentialist narratives, which constitutes a popular framework for a number of Western academic works and journalistic reports about the Arab Middle East in the hysterical post-September 11 world. Contextualization also helps us to find out the clusters of forces that resulted in the deforming of the PPM in the region. Therefore, throughout the discussions in this study, while paying attention to the details of the Yemeni case, I maintain a link between the local, national, regional and international dimensions. To compile this study, I have relied on an interdisciplinary approach, which combines development studies, international relations, political history, human geography and anthropology. The latter has an impressive body of scholarly works on Yemen. Published academic sources in Arabic were very useful not only in constructing the background and socio-historical guide, but above all in providing me with reflections of the indigenous political and cultural perspectives that are of interest to the topic of this study. It is hoped, therefore, that these

translated indigenous perspectives will contribute in bridging western/Arab scholarly works on the topic, and in furnishing a fuller explanation.

As a consequence of my two field research trips to Yemen (the first was from the 6th of September 2007 to the 5th of October 2007; the second was from the 26th of April 2008 to the 15th of September 2008) I gained insight into the socio-economic and political life in Yemen. In addition to collecting relevant literature and data in Arabic, attending a number of seminars, and reading government and opposition newspapers daily, the field trips provided me with the opportunity of conducting informative interviews with Yemeni academics, politicians, senior government employees, political parties' figures, journalists and representatives of international organizations in Sana'a.

1.4 Organization of the Study

This research is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the topic and outlines the theoretical approach. It also considers the research problem, the objectives and methodology of the study. To gain a mountaintop view of the PPM in the Middle East, Chapter two is allocated for reviewing the old and recent published works, in Arabic and English, which have studied Arab political systems and their relations with their societies. Attention is paid to reviewing major relevant scholarly works on Yemen. Chapter three seeks to highlight the particularity of political transformation in Yemen, and the role of external factors in building the modern Yemeni state. Chapter four concerns itself with analyzing the characteristics of state-tribe relations in Yemen, and the impact of such relations on shaping the PPM. To put the Yemeni case in context, the chapter allocates some space for comparing and contrasting the Libyan and Iraqi cases of state-society relations. The choice of these two countries is based on the fact that Libya and Iraq are also Arab republican systems with large tribal population. Chapter five addresses the emergence of the post 1990 party pluralism system, and discusses the main features of such a system. Chapter six focuses on studying civil-military relations, and attempts to bring to light the

role of the tribal-military network in the Yemeni PPM and the survival of Salih's regime. Chapter seven summarises the findings of this research and draws out their implications for the study of the PPM in the region.

CHAPTER TWO

Researching Political Modernization in the Middle East: a Literature Review of the Old and New Academic Moods

INTRODUCTION

To help select a method for this research, and to sharpen the understanding of the diverse theoretical and political premises that shape the process of political modernization (PPM) in the Middle East, this chapter catalogues how scholars and researchers have approached the analysis of the PPM in the region. The chapter aims to review and examine what the old and recent studies, in Arabic and English, on the PPM in the region reveal, and which indicators and theoretical approaches were used to answer central research questions regarding the political consequences of modernization within Arab political systems. To achieve this, the chapter is divided into two sections. Section one reviews the formative ideas on political modernization in the region, with brief readings from classical theorists. The main objectives of this section are firstly, to highlight when, how and why the prevailing knowledge about political modernization in the Middle East is created. Secondly, to support the argument that trends in academic writing on political modernization in the Middle East tend to develop in tandem with U.S. policy towards the region. Section two concerns itself with discussing the various conceptual frameworks that were developed in the study of the PPM in the Arab Middle East within the post Cold War and the post 9/11 climates. The focus in this section is on the important consequences of the two climates for the study of Arab political systems. The section concerns itself with conducting a regional survey of recent literature, in Arabic and English, under the following four headings: 1) political pluralism and transition to democracy, 2) new political economy, 3) civil society, and 4) political Islam. Each heading represents a recent theoretical approach in the study of the PPM in the Arab world. The section attempts also to situate Yemen within the generated literature under these four headings.

2.1 The Old Orthodox Academic Mood: 'Mecca or Mechanization'

Advocates of the orthodox assumptions of modernization theory (MT) were the dominant informants of the early research on political modernization in the Middle East. Motivated by the disintegration of western colonial empires, the emergence of the USA as a superpower, and the Cold War agenda of preventing the waves of socialism and communism from reaching the shores of the newly independent states, a group of American scholars showed a great interest in researching the economic and socio-cultural conditions conducive to economic growth and political modernization, as a part of the overall process of development in the so called 'Third World' countries. The field of political modernization research in the Middle East was born, therefore, within the geopolitical context of the Cold War[1]. The political claims of the MT, on the other hand, were constructed on the basis of a theory of economic development.

Academically, relying on the MT in researching the socio-economic and political life in the Middle East marks the expansion of the study of the region in the U.S. academia beyond its traditional interest in archaeology, religion, history and ancient languages. It is also a landmark in the field of mixing modern social science techniques with crude Orientalism. The intellectual roots of the MT-based research can be traced to Max Weber's sharp dichotomy between modern and traditional societies, and his Theory of Authority, which included a typology of three forms of government: traditional, charismatic and rational-legal. The latter is a form of government that rests upon a belief in legality of those elevated to government to issue commands. The institutional roots of the MT, on the other hand, are firmly connected to the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), which was created in 1954 by the Committee on Comparative Politics, and chaired for many years by Gabriel Almond and subsequently Lucien Pye. The latter

scholar studied the links between modernization and communication (Pye, 1963), while the former (along with Verba) examined the links between modernization and political culture (Almond& Verba, 1963). Other members of the committee conducted research on bureaucracy and modernization (laPalombara, 1963), education and modernization (Coleman, 1965), and politics of development (Almond& Coleman, 1960). Many of these studies were published in the first major journal of development studies "*Economic Development and Cultural Change*", first published in 1952. The title of the journal is an indicator of the early perception of modernization and development. Such a perception was constructed on the basis of the false assumption that traditional societies lack the cultural and institutional capacity to carry out economic development and cultural change from within. To modernize and develop their political and socio-economic institutions, developing countries should be, therefore, infused not only with financial resources, and technical skills, but also with a western 'rationalist and positivist spirit' (Lerner, 1958).

By adopting such views, early modernization theorists have turned modernization into an ideological defence for the Western capital over the rest of the world (Giddens, 1982). According to the classic version of the theory, traditional society is a non-participant society, where people's horizons are limited by locale (Lerner, 1958, p.50). Based on the tradition-modern polarity, early modernization theorists constructed what Gusfield (1966) calls the seven fallacy assumptions:(1) Developing societies have been static societies, (2) Traditional culture is a consistent body of norms and values, (3) Traditional society is a homogeneous social structure, (4) Old traditions are displaced by new changes, (5) Traditional and modern forms are always in conflict, (6) Tradition and modernity are mutually exclusive systems, and (7) Modernizing processes weaken traditions. Advocates of the orthodox version of MT built these fallacies on the basis of the single worldwide culture that they envisioned - a modern, industrial, educated,

democratic, secular, rational, liberal, individualist, 'tolerant' and consumer-oriented culture. The adoption and defending of such fallacies for political reasons has encouraged the formulation of ideological terms that are divorced from the reality in which they must be situated, and to the habitual neglect of the vital role of the international system in shaping and reshaping modernization and development in the developing world.

In their quest for justifying the need for the developing world to follow the western model of political modernization and development, advocates of MT were confronted with one major challenging question: how to duplicate the political, economic and social conditions which led to the 'take-off' phase in the western world? To answer the question, advocates of MT propagated a set of abstract assumptions about the role of culture, technology, state and market, which have had little contextual relevance. Instructive in this respect is the work of Lucian Pye, *Aspects of Political Development*. This work provides an excellent reflection on the perceptions and outlooks of the SSRC-sponsored Cold War scholarship. According to Pye, political consequences of modernization have to be viewed as "one aspect of a multi-dimensional process of social change" and as "intimately associated with other aspects of social and economic change"—all of which could be termed "development syndrome". Analysing the major theoretical and empirical works of MT researchers in the Middle East reveals that beneath the dense academic jargon of their works, the U.S. political interests are obvious. One of the best examples of such works on the region is the empirical research of Daniel Lerner (1958). In the following section, I examine such an influential and a quintessential text.

2.1.1 Lerner's Modernization Paradigm: Feeding the US Military Propaganda

During the Second World War, Daniel Lerner worked for the US Army in the psychological warfare department. It is not a coincidence that many of the brightest

advocates of MT had professional links with the political and defence establishment in Washington. Rostow, for example, became a White House national security adviser and later chairman of the State Department's Policy Planning Council, and Pye taught courses in counterinsurgency theory for the State Department and advised the new U.S. Agency for International Development. One of Lerner's main projects at the defence department was analysing the effectiveness of US war propaganda in Hitler's Germany. Lerner submitted his project as his PhD dissertation. In the dissertation, Lerner classified people of Germany into three categories: Hard-Core Nazis, Anti-Nazis, and the Non-Political. The latter, according to his dissertation, should be the main target group for US propaganda.

Clearly, this classification is very similar to Lerner's categorization of the people in the Middle East: 'Traditionalists', who are difficult to convert into modernists, 'Modern', who are already Westernized, and the 'Transitionals'. The latter category constitutes, according to Lerner, the 'group of prime importance for immediate expansion as communication audiences'. This is because their attitudes are most likely to move towards a modern Western life (Lerner, et al, 1951). In his discussion, Lerner describes the transitionals as the people who are "acquiring psychic mobility, a personal capacity to identify widely and empathize readily. They are secularizing… They are becoming activist. In their view, problems are to be dealt with by policy rather than by prayer".

Although Lerner's study covered Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iran, he treated the small Turkish village of Balgat, at the outskirts of Ankara-Turkey, as the microcosm of change in the Middle East. According to Schech & Haggis (2000), Lerner's survey shows how Parson's pattern variables can be used to make sense of the rapid pace of change. Two villagers, the chief and the grocer, come to represent tradition and modernity, respectively. The chief represents the values of tradition, such as courage,

loyalty, obedience and devout Muslimism. The grocer, on the other hand, was, according to Lerner "a very different man". Though born and bred in Balgat, he "lives in a different world, populated more actively with imaginings and fantasies - hungering for whatever is different and unfamiliar". The framework of Lerner's work attempts to highlight how information and media help fashion behavioral systems that transform life-ways and political thinking. According to such a framework, an aspect of secularization accompanies the influence of media, and as a result, the "pre-literate" people obtain new desires, wants and expressions. Mass media is part of an interlocking system of modernity where information flows interact with the distribution of power, wealth, and status. Media literacy, Lerner suggests, correlates with urbanization and industrialization in the transition to a democratic participatory society. In addition to media, urbanization leads, according to Lerner, to increased social welfare and to an accumulation of capital, which is a fundamental precursor to educating the populations in the Middle East. In other words, modernization is the road to democracy and economic development. To gain more understanding of Lerner's approach, let us have a look at his basic typology of modernization in the Middle East:

Type	**Literacy**	**Urbanism**	**Media Participation**	**Empathy**	**Opinion Range**
Modern	+	+	+	+	1
Transitional A	-	+	+	+	2
Transitional B	-	-	+	+	3
Transitional C	-	-	-	+	4
Traditional	-	-	-	-	5

Table 1: Lerner, 1958, ibid. p. 71

Lerner's typology attempts to oversimplify the complex process of tradition-modern interactions in Middle Eastern societies, where formal and folk Islam continues to coexist with urbanization, universities, cinemas and economic development. Lerner's system character of modernization[2] was applied to amplify the superiority of the Western model of development. He cites, for instance, the following reasons for choosing such a model as the baseline: First, the Western model has expanded and flourished to the extent that it is to be seen in "virtually all modernizing societies on all continents of the world, regardless of variations in race, color, creed...". Secondly, the Western model of modernization and development " provides the most developed model societal attributes: power, wealth, skill, rationality, which Middle Eastern spokesmen continue to advocate as their own goal……What the West is, in this sense, the Middle East seeks to become". The march of western modernization and development in the Middle East will, according to Lerner, wipe out Arab/Islamic traditions, "spells the passing of traditional society and defines the policy planning of social change". Lerner affirms that the main modernization-related question in the minds of the people in the region is "how to modernize traditional lifeways that no longer work to their own satisfaction". This influential study raises, however, a number of questions. For instance, how does Lerner establish the difference between tradition and modernity in the Turkish village? On what assumptions does he ground his interpretation? What does modernization and development do to the village of Balgat and its people, culture, livelihood, etc.? For more than a decade, Lerner's views served as basic foundations for the popular misconceptions that Middle Eastern societies would have to pass through an inevitable series of stages, and that rural and tribal communities in the region are either cases of arrested development or people who have quite simply failed, or as Maybury-Lewis (1992) put it, flunked the test and were left behind. Lerner's work is one of the best early reflections on the contradictions between

the theoretical postulates of western modernization and realities in Middle East societies, and has been, therefore, strongly criticized for being ahistorical, pro-capitalist, ethnocentric and intentionally blind to recognizing the important external causes of underdevelopment.

Few years after Lener's pubication, Karl Deutsch (1961) noted what he termed the 'circular causation' of modernization process. Few decades later, systematic theoretical challenges emerged from both ends of the political spectrum. For example, Huntington (1987), one of the leading modernization theorists, stated the following: “May be the time has come to stop trying to change these societies and to change the model, to develop models of modern Islamic, Confucian, or Hindu society that would be relevant to countries where those cultures prevail”. The ambitions of the early modernization theory literature to frame the analysis of political transformation in the developing world were undermined by the fact that decades after decolonization, Western liberal democracy and economic development did not, as modernization theorists predicted, emerge in the South. Randell and Theobald (1998), on the other hand, argue that the orthodox conceptualizations of modernization have failed to realise that modernization “may actually revitalize dormant traditional institutions and practices”.

During the last two decades, an accumulated body of scholarly works made it very clear that the 1950s-60s perception of modernization as a project that is ‘historically western’ but ‘sociologically global’ is false. As a result, a new phase or mood in the field of studying political modernization emerged. The following section explores such a phase by reviewing the recent generated literature on Arab political systems and their relations with their societies. The objective of the review is to derive some ideas and draw out the questions that the authors asked.

2.2 The New Academic Mood: from the fall of the Wall to the fall of the WTC

In the 1990s, the study of political modernization in the Middle East became distinguished by a noticeable scholarly move beyond the 'essentialist' and 'reductionist' explanations of state-society relations in the Arab Middle East. In this section, I turn my attention to four main theoretical frameworks, which have given a new face to the study of Arab political systems. These frameworks are: 1) Political pluralism and transition to democracy, 2) New political economy, 3) Civil society and 4) Political Islam. The adoption of these new theoretical frameworks is related to a set of recent political, economic and social developments that took place at the national, regional and international fronts. Changes at the national front include, among others, the popular discontent generated by worsening economic woes as a result of the application of the IMF-imposed Structural Adjustment Program, the gradual political openings, the attempts to transition to democracy, and the emergence of new social and economic domestic forces. At the regional front, on the other hand, the US-led Desert Storm to liberate Kuwait, and Madrid Peace Conference have caused major changes regarding the pan Arabism project, regional security, regional cooperation, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Major changes at the international front include the disintegration of the Soviet Empire, the rise of the US hegemonic role, and the expansion and deepening of the globalization process.

Each of these four frameworks has it is own set of concepts, indicators, tools and research questions. The proceeding review of these newly applied frameworks shall illustrate how theoretical approaches in the study of political trajectories in the region are highly influenced as much by social, economic, strategic and political contexts, as they are by scientific factors and considerations. The two core messages in the

following review are, first, there is no single factor that can explain the democratization deficit and the persistence of authoritarianism in Arab political systems. Second, the wide gap between the modernization-related transformations of the Middle East at the socio-economic front and those at the political front can only be explained through the contextualization of structural and non-structural factors.

2.2.1 The Approach of Political Pluralism and Transition to Democracy: Evolution and Levels of Analysis

Pluralism and transition to democracy approaches is one of the popular theoretical tools that are used in studying the mode of governance in Arab political systems. The background of this popularity is constructed by the 1990s liberalizing breeze that has created a space for gradual transition to democracy and pluralism in a number of Arab countries. Other contributing factors in the construction were the post-Taif resumption of parliamentary experience in Lebanon and the post-second Gulf War resumption of parliamentary activities in Kuwait, and the change of rulers that took place in Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan, Syria and Morocco. This popular approach passed through an evolution process that can be classified, for the sake of summarizing, into three phases of researching: 1) studying the causes and manifestations of the absence of democracy in the region, 2) studying the attempts to transition to democracy and pluralism in the region, and 3) explaining the problems of and obstacles to transition to democracy in the region.

Phase One: Studying the Causes of the Absence of Democracy (1980s)

One of the main questions that hung over the Middle East democratization debate during this phase was regarding the fact that Arab political regimes are both unusually undemocratic and unusually stable. In the 1980s, scholarly answers to the

question were wrapped into negative terminologies such as *Azmah* (crisis), *Mushkelah* (problem) and *M'azaq* (impasse). These terminologies shaped the studying of the Middle Eastern democratic deficit (Hilal& Ibrahim, 1986; Betar, 1984; Hudson, 1988, Ghalioun, 1986; Al-Khouli, 1986; Salame, 1987, Anderson, 1999; Mansour, 1992). Some authors of this phase suggested two sets of historical and socio-economic causes to explain why Arab political systems are lagging behind in political modernization and democracy fronts. The first set includes the accumulated long experience of authoritarianism, and the Islamic heritage, while the second set includes economic disparity, central planned economy, the weakness of the middle class and a high illiteracy rate. Other authors pointed to the Arab/Muslim culture as the source behind the failure of democracy to develop roots in the Arab Middle East (Ajami, 1981; Vatikiotis, 1987; Pryce-Jones, 1989). Influenced by the works of Patai (1973) and Smith (1974), authors who use the cultural tool to explain the absence of liberal democracy in the region argue that unless approaches to democracy are culturally appropriate they cause profound social and economical division within Middle Eastern and North African society. The influential argument of the 'Arab Rentier State' was put forward by Beblawi & Luciani (1987) during this phase. This argument highlights how in many parts of the Arab Middle East, espacially in the Gulf monarachies, the state relies not on the extraction of domestic surplus but on external revenues, or rents, such as those derived from oil and gas.

Phase Two: Studying Transition to Democracy and Pluralism (1990s)

This phase has been crystallized in response to the transition to democracy and pluralism in Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen, and to the consequences of the Gulf War on governance and state-society relations in the region. A large number of group

and individual scholarly works emerged which focused on surveying the reasons behind the regional cautious move to liberal democracy, and analysing the pattern and framework of political pluralism and opening in the Arab world (S'abet, 1990; Farhat, 1992; Balqazeez, 1997; El-Sayyid, 1994; Norton, 1997; Abu-A'mood, 1991; Osseiran, 1994; Brynen& Others, 1998; Hudson, 1991; Sivan, 1997; Harik, 1994; Moosa'ad, 1993; Niblock& Murhpy, 1993). These works draw a connecting line between transition to democracy and the growing crisis of legitimacy in Arab political systems. The works highlight how Arab regimes give priority to preserving their resource bases than to democratization, and how these regimes maintain their policy interests through a set of strategies, which include, among others, limited elections, external aid and repression and/or co-option of opposition forces.

During this phase, the use of culture as an explanatory tool in the democratization debate in the region has been strongly criticized for being 'crude Orientalism', 'Eurocentric chauvinism' and 'anthropological reductionism' (Hudson, 1995). The works of Hinnebusch (1996, 1998), on the other hand, discount the popular argument that economic liberalization expands the base of the bourgeoisie, which in turn becomes a breeding site for pressure groups demanding political liberalization. Hinnebusch's evidence from Syria demonstrates how the bourgeoisie in the region are being created by the state itself, and, as a result, the interests of such bourgeoisie are in harmony with those of the state. In light of this regime-bourgeoisie alliance, liberalization in the region takes the form of what Hinnebusch calls 'calculated decompression'. Because incidents of transition to democracy and pluralism in the region did not lead to major changes in the mode of governance, terms such as 'Liberalized Autocracy', 'Stalled Democracy', 'State Managed Pluralism', 'Semi-Authoritarian Regimes', 'Deliberalization Process', 'Controlled Liberalization' and

'Liberalization versus Democracy' have become the most widely used windows for looking at the current processes of political modernization and democratization in the Arab world. Three of the most influential arguments that appeared during this phase on the surface of the democratization debate in the region were 'Defensive Democratization' (Robinson, 1998), 'Middle East Expectionalism' (Brombley, 1997), and 'Democracy without Democrats' (Salame, 1993). The 1990s was indeed a decade of positive steps on the road to democracy and pluralism in the Arab world, but by the end of the decade the results of these steps were, according to Nonneman (2001), disappointing. To support his argument, Nonneman refers to the fact that no dynastic Arab regime has been toppled by revolution or replaced by election.

Phase Three: Explaining the Failure of Transition to Democracy (2000s)

Already by the end of the 1990s, observers of the Middle East started wondering whether countries in the region were democratizing (Ehteshami, 1999) or whether they were in the guise of democracy (Kassem, 1999). Others started sounding warning bells at the *Naksa* of democracy in the Arab world (Ghalioun, 1996). In response to these wonderings and warnings, a strong body of literature has been accumulating during the first decade of the 21st century. This body of literature reflects the recent intellectual efforts made in explaining the obstacles to democracy and the structural reasons behind the persistence of authoritarianism in the region (Al-Najjar, 2000; Carothers, 2003; Bouzeed, 2003; Ben Antar, 2001, Hinnebusch, 2006; Posusney& Angrist, 2005; King, 2007). This literature draws a line between the tactical choices made by the political elites and the failure of democratic transitions in the region. Authors argue that at the heart of the failure of transition to democracy lies the fact that transition was engineered by the ruling elites for achieving pragmatic objectives that are directly related to

securing their political survival. Eva Bellin (2005) makes this point clear when she observed how unlimited presidential power is maintained alongside multi-party legislative elections in the region.

2. 3 The Approach of New Political Economy

As an interdisciplinary science, political economy integrates economic systems and doctrines to disclose their political and sociological premises (Mayer, 1987). This approach uses formal theoretical models combined with statistical ones for empirical testing in an effort to bring to the surface the patterns that govern political behaviour of states. The explanatory power and wide relevance of political economy is reflected in its diverse use in the discussions regarding a broad spectrum of topics, for example in human rights (Chomsky & Hermann, 1979), radicalism (Wintrobe, 2006), revolution (Zardove, 1981), gender (Eviota, 1992), Fascism (Baker, 2006), development (Bates, 2001), corruption (Jain, 2001), decentralization (Manor, 1999), immigration (Benhabib, 1996), and transition to democracy (Hollifield & Jillson, 2000). New political economy was born as a result of the recent modifications in the position, concepts and analytical tools of the classical Marxist political economy.

Since the 1990s, the lens of new political economy has become an important instrument for surveying and analysing Arab political systems. Two leading scholarly studies opened the gate in this regard: William Zartman's 1987 work on the political economy of Morocco, and Richards and Waterbury's 1990 major study on the political economy of the Middle East. The analysis in these two major works demonstrated how political economy-based observation of Arab political systems is very useful in exposing not only the interaction between state systems, economic development processes and social forces, but also between changes in demography, education, labour

markets, urbanization, agriculture and labour migration on the one hand, and political reform and mode of governance on the other.

These two works were followed by a number of important contributions to the application of new political economy approach in the study of the relations between Arab political systems and their economic performance, using a regional prism (Niblock &Wilson, 1999; Hakimian &Moshaver, 2000; Carkoglu&Others, 1998), sector-regional prism (Hazbun, 2004), and multiple Arab countries study (White, 2001). At the national level, on the other hand, authors used this approach in dealing with the interaction between political and economic ideologies in Syria (Hinnebusch, 1995; Perthes 1997; Gray, 1997), Libya (Gurney, 1996), Egypt (Farah, 2008; Oweiss, 1990), Saudi Arabia (Niblock&Malik, 2007); Lebanon (Gaspard, 2004; and Jordan (Knowles, 2005; Piro, 1998). In these studies, three major areas of investigation can be identified: 1) Economic roots of authoritarianism and democracy, 2) Political consequences of rentier economy and 3) political costs of economic reforms. In what follows, I shall spend some time reviewing the literature that was generated in the three areas of investigation. I conclude this section by reviewing the important work of Kiren Chaudhry (1997), which is the only available major work that sheds light on the impact of changing international economy on state institutions in Yemen.

2.3.1 *Economic Roots of Authoritarianism and Democracy*

There is a consensus among scholars of the Middle East that in addition to the U.S. support, and a loyal domestic coercive apparatus, Arab authoritarian regimes remain firmly in control of the political arena because of the extensive patronage systems they have established. Observers of the region who adopt a political economy perspective link this authoritarianism to the economic policies of Arab states. According

to them, the roots of state authoritarianism in the Arab world are found in the post-independence statist economy, which monopolized and controlled all economic activities. Such a monopoly resulted in state's control of political activities, and to the hovering of the political elites above social conflict.

Alnasrawi (1991), however, contends that the roots are in the dependency-based integration of Arab economies into the international economic systems, and in Arab nationalist thought. Ibrahim (2005), on the other hand, traces the roots to the social contract that was signed in the 1950s and 60s between Arab regimes and their masses. According to the contract, Arab regimes will carry the burden of development, social transformation, liberating Palestine, and achieving Arab unity, whilst the masses postpone their demands for democracy. In the case of the GCC countries, such a contract was signed on the basis of the ability of the ruling families to distribute wealth and preserve national elites.

This approach draws our attention to the 1980s period when the region started to experience a sharp decline in politics based on class struggle, and regimes began to lose their grip on economies to international financial institutions. Declining state revenues combined with privatization, cuts in public spending, alarming population growth, debt-devaluation-inflation cycle, budget deficit and unemployment have resulted in the weakening of state control, which led to the proliferation of groups that are beyond the manipulation of the state (Anderson, 2001). The restructuring of the economy as a response to economic instability led, therefore, to the contraction of the role of the Arab state in social life, and thus to the development of new economic and social forces. In short, diminishing the role of the Arab state in economy resulted in boosting civil society, in general, and Islamic NGOs and movements, in particular.

2.3.2 *The Political Consequences of Rentier Economy*

Several insights from the literature on rentier economy have helped students of state-society relations in the Middle East to identify another source that has impeded or aborted the process of democratization in the Arab world. The insights of this literature have also helped in suggesting answers to the puzzling question: why the Bonapartist moment in the Arab Middle East has lasted that long? This body of literature is constructed on the basis of the theory of rentier state, which is a complex set of associated ideas regarding governance and state-society relations in political systems that are dominated by external rent. According to the theory, rentier economy is a particular type of economy that depends on the inflow of massive amounts of external rent. The theory is so popular in the field of Middle East politics that it has turned into the hegemonic theoretic framework in writings on the Arab Gulf region (Herb, 1999).

Two main questions guided the discussions of a community of Middle East specialists concerning rentierism. First, does natural resources wealth promote authoritarianism? Second, when, how and where is resource wealth more likely to support democracy in the region? According to Ghalioun (2004), in addition to the support of western forces, “oil and mineral rents and remittances from nationals working abroad, has enabled Arab regimes to ignore public opinion”. The literature identifies a second critical barrier to democratization in rentier states, namely the “low dependence of states on citizens” (Richards, 2005). Because rentier governments in the region do not tax their people, they do not have to deal with serious demands for political participation or to strike a representative bargain with their societies. Thus,

these governments have little incentive to reform (Gause, 1994; Chaudhry, 1999; Beblawi, 1987; Herb, 2005). Advocates of the rentier theory argue that resource wealth promotes authoritarianism in the Arab Middle East (Anderson, 1987; Crystal, 1995; Vandewalle, 1998; Luciani, 1990). To support such an argument, Ross (2001), for example, presented statistical evidence based on his testing with pooled time-series cross-section data for 113 states between 1971 and 1997. One of the main findings in Ross's study is that there is a negative relationship between resource rents and democracy. Authors refer to this negative relation as the 'resource curse', which is originating from the fiscal basis of allocation governments[3]. It is a curse because these resources are used for the expansion and strengthening of institutions of coercion, and for the stifling of citizenry's democratic impulse. In short, rentier economy in the region has a repression effect.

The rich literature on rentierism informs us that rentier economy in the Arab world is highly vulnerable to external price shocks, and therefore it is characterized by an economic growth based on boom and bust cycles. It also informs us that the primary goal of such an economy is allocation. The latter refers to politically motivated distribution of national wealth through the use of a system of quotas and agencies. In the oil monarchies in Jordan, these quotas are widely known as '*Makrama Malakiyah*' (noble gesture of hospitality). Etymologically, this Arabic term reflects what Ibrahim (2005) calls "the directed and conscious mixing of citizen rights and royal grants". This mixing produces a formula that breaks the psyche of individuals and deactivates the citizenship-based sense of responsibilities, which in turn can partially explain the success of 'behaviour control mechanism' in oil-based rentier societies in the Arab world.

The sharp decline in oil prices in the 1980s and 1990s led to much discussion of the impact of such a decline on the breaking or at least the weakening of the authoritarian resource curse in the region (Mohamamedi, 2004; Al-Kawari, 2002). Observers of the Gulf monarchies noted that the 1980s-90s oil price-crises combined with the heavy financial burden of the second Gulf War has eroded the fiscal power of these monarchies, and exposed the fragility of rentier economy in the region (Weiffen, 2008; Gaodat & Jaohar, 1996). The crisis was clearly reflected in the sharp decline in per capita income, for example in Saudi Arabia, where it had declined from around $17,000 to about $8,200 (Looney, 2004). In light of the economic crises and with 'rent' as their primary tool for the pacification of their citizens, the ruling tribal families of the patriarchal autocracies in the Gulf region were forced to introduce economic and political changes and reforms. (Ehteshami, A., 2003). In addition to economic measures such as privatization, granting foreign companies the right to invest without a local partner, and allowing non-nationals to participate in the stock market, a number of political reforms were initiated. Kuwait is an excellent example here, where women were granted the right to vote and run for office, and liberals and Islamist members of its vibrant parliament challenge the political predominance of the ruling family (Herb, 2008). In Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, rising unemployment and poverty rates led fifty liberal intellectuals and religious scholars alike to present to late King Fahd in 1991 a Memorandum of Advice, in which they called for the promotion of an equal distribution of the country's resources among citizens (Hamzawy, 2007). Other examples include the Omani Elections, and the national charter in Bahrain. Interestingly, these changes give birth to residential associations and other such civil society organizations.

Other reforms have been reported in all other GCC states, albeit at differential speeds. Examples of such reforms are the restoration of the parliament in Bahrain, and municipal elections in Qatar. However, despite the positive changes in the Emirs-Parliaments relations (Herb, 2002), the fundamental drivers of change in the Gulf, as in other parts of the Arab Middle East, continue to be the ruling elites themselves and the reforms "appear to be mainly liberalizing rather than democratizing" (Ehteshami & Wright, 2007). The reality in the Sheikhdoms and monarchies of the GCC makes it clear to students of the region that economic growth does not lead to democratization and, thus, political modernization. One of the interesting assumptions in the debate regarding rentierism and transition to democracy in the region is the one put forward by Schlumberger (2002), who formulated the hypothesis that the scarcer the sources of rentierism become, the greater the likelihood of political transformation.

2.3.3 *Political Costs of Economic Reforms*

Elsewhere, in non-oil rich Arab countries, political reforms and liberalization measures were also the result of economic pressure. In the 1980s, unrest and numerous urban protests over the lifting of subsidies and the spiralling cost of living took place in Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Jordan, Algeria, Egypt, and even in civil war stricken Lebanon. In the summer of 1987, the rival factions in the war joined hands to stage a strong protest against a drop in the value of the Lebanese Lira (Bayat, 2003). The weakening of economic populism, which accompanied the adopted liberalization policies in Arab countries, and the social and political consequences of such weakening have received a great deal of scholarly attention (Niblock & Murphy, 1993; Kandil, 1993; Handoussa, 1997; Barkey, 1992; Hinnebusch, 2001; Bayat, 2002; Isiksal, 2003; Belev, 2000; Kienle, 1997; Harik& Sullivan, 1992).

The authors emphasize that the cracks in economic populism, which appeared in the 1980s, mirrored Arab regimes violation of the traditional social contract. As a result, regimes popularity among the peasants, workers, and middle strata have been seriously damaged, which in turn led to the rise of radical politics in the region (Ates, 2005), and to the disturbance of social balance and the flourishing of political and administrative corruption (Ibrahim, 2005). This literature brings to the surface the different *Infitah* strategies in the region. Chaudhry (1991), for instance, observing how "Egypt's widely publicized *infitah* policy resulted in the privatization of exactly two factories over a period of 15 years, in a single year", while " the Iraqi government sold 70 large factories in construction materials and mineral extraction, food processing and light manufacturing to the private sector". These studies also investigate the degree to which regional/international factors determined the acceptance or resistance of Arab countries to economic reforms.

At the regional level, the peace agreements signed by Egypt and Jordan brought massive neo-liberalism-based economic assistance from the U.S. to these two countries, while Syria had to pay a heavy economic price for its political position regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. At the international level, on the other hand, one of the most important debated issues has been the external pressure, which the IMF and World Bank put on Arab regimes, and how such a pressure led to forced integration of their fragile economy into the global economy, erosion of sovereignty, and to the imposition of neo-liberalism thought in both the economic and the political domain in the Arab Middle East. The debate included also the WTO-imposed roadmap towards good governance. In conclusion, contrary to the conventional western understanding of the consequences of political and economic liberalization on the process of political

modernization and democracy, in the Arab Middle East there is no necessary positive relation between liberalization and the process of democratization.

2.3.4 *Yemen through the Prism of Political Economy*

How do changes in the international economy system influence domestic institutions of Arab states? And how do national institutions of such states shape outcomes? These were the two main questions of departure in the 'Price of Wealth' by Chaudhry. Comparing the boom-bust cycles in Saudi Arabia, and the impact of these cycles on Yemen's politics and economy, Chaudhry exposes the alternating social and organizational origins of institutions, arguing that both broad changes in the international economy and specific forms of international integration shape institutional outcomes.

This contributive work is based on contrasting the political economy of the two neighbouring Arab states of Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and argues that 1) The analytical tasks of explaining institutional origins and institutional change in periods of isolation and immersion in the international economy are not identical, 2) The mechanisms through which international forces shape domestic institutions vary, depending on the forms of integration into the international economy and on broad sea changes in the organization of the international economy itself, and that 3) the above mentioned two levels of variation have implications for how we study institutional change(p.8).

Using Yemen as an extreme case of dependence on labour remittances, which, along with oil, constitute the two dominant forms of capital inflows in the Arab Middle East. Chaudhry notes that this form of capital inflow shaped the structure and capacity of the Yemeni state. Yemen was (until the 1990s), the main exporter of labour force to Saudi Arabia and has been exposed to the consequences of major economic changes in

Saudi Arabia. The best example here, or the 'legendary' one as Chaudhry puts it, is the 1980s oil-price crises in Saudi Arabia, which resulted in the dropping of Yemeni labour remittances to about 60%, and the dropping of vital Saudi development aid (SDA) to the Yemeni government to only 1% of the state budget. Bearing in mind that the SDA to Yemen, through direct cash payment and in-kind contributions in the fields of health, internal security, education, water, electricity, and transport, covered the entire budget of the Yemeni government, the sharp decline in the SDA was indeed a severe fiscal crisis to Yemen. In response to such a crisis, the Yemeni government was forced to introduce heavy taxation, foreign trade reforms, and a package of restrictions on the activities of the powerful private sector. At the heart of the power of Yemen's private sector lies the fact that remittances sent from the one million Yemenis working in Saudi Arabia were bypassing Yemen's state institutions. These remittances used to enter Yemen through a vast informal network of banking, and this bypassing has resulted in "expanding the power of the commercial and industrial elite" at the expense of the weak state agencies and institutions.

The direct links between Saudi Arabia, as an oil-based economy, and Yemen, as a remittance-depending economy, is illustrated by Chaudhry's reflections on how these remittances, particularly during boom periods in the Saudi economy, provided funds to hundreds of local cooperatives, which took over the task of providing basic infrastructure and social development throughout the rural and urban areas of Yemen. These community-led projects have "created a balance of economic power between the state and society, and within society itself".

In summary, labour and oil exporters in the region experience identical economic cycles but generate radically different state, market, and financial institutions in response to different resource flows. Furthermore, the volatile and changing

international economy poses a serious threat to the task of creating national institutions in a less developed and tribally/regionally divided country such as Yemen.

2.4 The Approach of Civil Society: Use, Overuse and Abuse

During the last two decades, a civil society approach has been used extensively in researching and analysing Arab political systems. The increasing attention devoted by specialists of the Middle East to civil society in the region should be seen as a part of western policy makers, international donors and global media celebrations of the role which civil society organizations in East Europe have played in the rapid but peaceful move towards political and economic liberalization in the Eastern Camp, and thus in provoking the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The attention is also a part of the academic rediscovery of the notion of civil society as a key variable in a stable pluralist transition (Hinnebusch, 1993), a clear mirror for studying state-society relations and the preconditions for democracy (Seligman, 1992; Arato, 2000; Eberly, 2000), and a useful over-arching theoretical concept that links "democracy, development and peaceful management of conflicts" (Ibrahim, 1998).

Because of its nature as a major source of alternative linkages and bonds, civil society has been so highly valued in Western literature and socio-political psyche to the extent of being perceived as a "crucial antidote to the political viruses to which mass society is vulnerable" (Edwards, Michael & Diani, 2001). Another leading western scholar treats civil society as a school for teaching democratic values and self-governance (Putnam, 1994). In the scholarship on the Arab Middle East, however, the taken-for-granted goodness of the concept of civil society has generated many concerns and question marks about the nature, characteristics, definition, relations and application of the concept. For example, questions like: what does 'civil' mean? How do we

measure the growth of civil society in the region? Can the definition and broad outlines of civil society be applied productively to understand political modernization and democratization in the Arab Middle East? What is the value of applying the concept to the study of socio-cultural and political life in the region? Does the weakness of civil society in the Middle East account for the failure of democratization in the region? Do policies geared to strengthening civil society automatically produce social and political tranquillity in the region? And, why, unlike in other regions of the world, has the revolt by civil society against authoritarianism been delayed in the Arab Middle East? To collect the main responses to these questions, in the following section, I shall pay a short visit to the landmarks in the field of researching civil society in the region.

Two research centres in the region and two multiyear research projects stand as prominent landmarks in researching civil society in the Arab world. These are the Centre for Arab Unity Studies (CAUS) and Ibn Khaldoun Centre for Development Studies (ICDS), and the two projects of Norton (1995-199) and Amin (1996-1998). In the 1980s, the CAUS launched a major research project researching the future of the Arab World, through studying the social and political forces that shape state-society relations in the region. In 1987, the project was published in the form of three major works; each is concerned with researching a particular sub-region in the Arab world: *Al-Maghreb* (al-Harmasi, 1987); *Al-Mashriq* (Salama, 1987); Arabian Peninsula (Al-Naqeeb). A year later, the CAUS published Ibrahim's comprehensive work on state-society relations in the Arab world (Ibrahim, 1988). These works should be seen as the first building block in the body of Arabic academic studies on civil society. It was only in 1992 that civil society and its role in democratization was addressed by the CAUS as a separate scholarly branch[4]. At this early stage, the CAUS discussions on civil society

revolved, mainly, around the role of regional civil society organizations, for example, Arab Lawyers Association, and Arab Human Rights Organization.

The second major indigenous building block in the study of civil society in the region was the extensive research project of Ibn Khaldoun Centre, titled "Civil Society and Democratic Transition in the Arab World". In 1995, this project generated, under the same title, a number of specialized civil society studies in Arabic addressing the cases of Lebanon (Antowan Massara), Libya (Mohamed Al-Megherbi), Iraq (Faleh Abdel-Jabar), Syria (George Berea), Bahrain (Moneerah Fakhro), Sudan (Hayder Ali), Egypt (Amani Qandeel), Palestine (Ziyad Abu Amr), Qatar (Abdel-Baset Abd-Mouti) and, in English, the case of Morocco (Azzedine Layachi). This early ICDS literature is characterized by its advocacy of civil society as the panacea for democratizing the region.

The third major building block was non-indigenous in nature. It was Norton's impressive 1995-1996 research project, which was published in two volumes on "Civil Society in the Middle East". In addition to demolishing the myth that the Arab world was lacking civil society and challenging the notion that civil society is alien to the Middle East, this work (which brought together dozens of leading scholars to analyze Middle Eastern political life through the prism of civil society-state relations) is an excellent reflection of the scholarly marriage that started to take place between solid conceptual and empirical investigations in the studying of modern political systems in the region.

The fourth block was the indigenous project of Samir Amin on "State and Society in the Arab World in the Shadow of new Policies of Capitalism". The project came to light in the form of four major studies: Egypt (Abdul-Fadeel, 1996), Lebanon (Abu-Sahqra& Shouaib, 1996), The Levant (Abu Rouman, 1998), and Al Maghreb

Region (Al-Kanz, 1998). Numerous contributions to the debate on civil society in the region were built on these four building blocks (Hinnebush, 1993; Carapico, 1998; Al-Sobeehi, 2000; Sharaf El-Deen, 2002; Scot, 2006; Garon, 2003; Langohr, 2004, Dalga & Persson, 1997; Hawthorne, 2004; Kamrava & Mora, 1998). This literature poses a serious challenge to the assumption that the region is resistant to democracy because it is lacking civil society. A number of authors have shown that civil society is not a new phenomenon in the region. For example, by 1952 Egypt had more than 800 civil society associations, including 8 political parties, 7 chambers of commerce, and 43 unions (Ibrahim, Adly & Shehata, 1999). Other scholars noted that by 1995, the number of registered civil society organizations in the Arab world counted to 70,000 (Ismael & Ismael, 1997). Hasaneen Ibarhim (2005) attributes this noticeable growth of civil society in the region to 1) the expansion of the middle class, 2) economic growth, 3) increased level of education, 4) population growth and the inability of the state to provide all segments in the society with social, economic, health and cultural services, and 5) the availability of a relatively marginal space of freedom of association in some Arab countries.

Regarding the mushrooming of NGOs in the region, Asef Bayat, after classifying them into: religiously motivated associations; classical welfare associations; professional NGOs and state-sponsored NGOs, argues that “social development does not only mean fulfilling basic needs; it also involves achieving social and economic rights and being self-sustaining”. He and others call for the widening of the conceptualization of civil society in the region so that it can include the studying of the strategies of urban mass protests: trade unionism, community activism and social Islamism (Bayat, 2002; Sadiki, 2000). Bayat concludes his study on activism in the region by stating that “it is a big mistake to leave the entire task of social development

to initiatives from below; a bigger mistake is to give up on the states-in particular, on their crucial role in large-scale development". However, whether one uses a narrow or broad definition of civil society, it is clear from the literature that the proliferation of civil societies in the region did not lead to democratization. Why? One of the reasons is suggested by Hawthrone (2004), who argues that such proliferation is one of the outcomes of the top-down liberalization, and, therefore, civil society was not a casual factor in the liberalization that has taken place. Other suggestions include those of Saker (2002), who, in the light of her examination of the relation between international donors and women NGOs in the region, purports that in reaction to the proliferation of NGOs, Arab states put their weight to limit the role of civil society by introducing tight restrictions on the activities of NGOs. This view is shared by Albrecht & Schlumberger (2004), who observe, "as soon as such organizations try to aggregate and articulate interests autonomously, the regimes usually suppress or co-opt them and their leaders". Compared to other regions in the world, the Arab Middle East stands very prominent in the field of state penetration of trade unions, professional associations and syndicates. To achieve a deep and profound penetration of civil societies, regimes in the region rely upon a number of measures ranging from the imposition of laws and bureaucratization to the creation of parallel organizations (Pitner, 2005). The latter measure has been reported in Tunisia, where the government created various 'sans Frontiere' organizations, which represent Tunisia in international conferences, especially those who address the issue of human rights. In her discussion on economic reform in Tunisia, Murphy (2000) goes further to argue that the Tunisian civil society is a part of President Bin Ali's corporatism. Observers of the civil society-state relationship in Egypt, on the other hand, often point to how the NGOs campaign against the restrictions imposed on their activities by the Law 153, for the year 1999, resulted in the passing of

a more restricted version of the law, in June 2002. The new version stipulates that all NGOs that are not registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs are deemed criminal offenders. Through investigating the varieties and variations within civil society organizations in the region, many scholars have come to the conclusion that the factor of autonomy does not exist in civil society in the Arab Middle East (Al-Sayyid, 1995), and that the high population of civil society is not strong enough "to guarantee the emergence of either political liberalism or political democracy" (Entelies, 1996). In short, Arab civil society is weak and fragmented due to the following two main reasons: 1) Regimes in the region are strong in the sense that they have not lost their *assabiyyah.* 2) Regimes' manipulation and oppression. As a result, Arab civil society failed in staving off authoritarianism, and in creating a kind of balance in the state-society relations in the region (Hawthrone, 2004). Interestingly, as a result of civil society weakness in the region, grassroots charity and boycotts have become new mediums of political mobilization. To highlight this point, Bayat (2003), for instance, refers to April 2002, when students at the American University in Cairo gathered thirty 250-ton truckloads of charitable products from factories, companies and homes in a four-day period, bringing them to Palestinian families in Gaza. Two particularly important issues receive much attention in the debates on civil society in the Arab world, the tribal/ethnic attachments and Islam. In a region where the construction of many political systems was based on tribal, sectarian, ethnic and clans' power relations and networks, the western notion of civil society becomes controversial. This is mainly because of the sharp western distinction between public and private spheres, which makes it impossible to consider traditional tribal and ethnic associations as a part of civil society. In Lebanon, for example, during the civil war, NGOs were linked to sect-based political parties and individual politicians. According to Traboulsi (2005), through the provision

of social and economic services, these NGOs play an important role “in reinforcing the patron-client relationship which is a feature of Lebanon and its political system”. However, in the case of Yemen, the quintessential traditional Arab society with strong and deeply rooted tribal and Islamic affiliations, Carapico (1998) brought to light the myriad ways Yemeni tribesmen have participated in political life, tried to shape their community-based life, and acted politically to improve their economic circumstances. According to Carapico, political activism in Yemen belies the stereotyping linked to a strictly western view of civil society and that despite the strong tribal attachment; Yemen progressed in party pluralism and freedom of expression, as will be discussed in this present study, far more than other countries in the region. Carapico’s study of Yemen’s civil society demonstrates how the mechanisms of civic activism are available in the local Yemeni culture and are imported as well. It also reveals that despite the fact that Yemen’s civil society is less formal and folksier than in other Arab countries, the intrinsic vitality of Yemen’s civic activity expands and contracts in the face of periods of political opening and repression. Carapico’s work argues that the size and features of the civic space in the region is not determined by primordial attachments. Instead, such activism depends on a cluster made of four main factors: 1) regimes and their power bases, 2) public infrastructure of communication and information, 3) constitutionalism and the judicial philosophies and 4) the economic resources available for public, private and voluntary-sector investment. To support her argument regarding the interactions between political circumstances, economic conditions and civic activism, Carapico identifies three major stations of political openings in the modern history of Yemen. The first station is in Aden and the Protectorates, in the period from the 1950s to the1960s. Here the British colonial administration restricted strikes but did, however allow the authorization of syndicates. Economically, on the other hand, this period and

location was characterized by foreign currency investment in urban services such as transport, health care…etc, and was affected by the post WWII recession and high inflation. This political/ economic environment resulted in creating the space for labor unions, independent press, cultural clubs, rural movements and labor political parties. The second major station is North Yemen in the period from the 1970s to the early 1980s. While the political features of this station included the banning of partisan activities, the prohibition of labor-based activism, and the suspension of the constitution by the military corrective movement; the economic context, on the other hand, was characterized by reliance on foreign aid, remittances of Yemeni migrants, commerce, and it witnessed the end of what Carapico calls the early 1980s 'second-hand prosperity'. As a result, civil society activity concentrated in self-help action in the form of roads and schools building, provision of water supplies, and the creation of pressure groups demanding the release of taxes for local services. The third major station is a united Yemen in the period from 1990 to 1994. Politically, this period, which witnessed a sort of balance between the state and society, was characterized by a new constitution and legislation, which permitted the establishment of political parties, opposition press and associations. The 1994 civil war and the constitutional amendments that followed have retracted freedom. At the economic front, oil discoveries encouraged investment and raised expectations. The negative impact of the Gulf crisis in the form of expulsion of Yemeni migrants from the neighboring oil monarchies, however, led to massive unemployment and high inflation. This was compounded with application of structural adjustment. As a result, civic activism took the form of multiparty competition, press, human rights-related activities, and forums for political and constitutional reforms (Carapico, 1998).

The findings of Carapico were numerically confirmed by Janine Clark, who found that in 2004 the number of Yemeni NGOs that were registered with the Ministry of Social Security and Social Affairs were 2000, plus hundreds of other NGOs that were registered with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. In addition to these, there were more than 1,000 unregistered ones (Clark, 2004). These NGOs created new social circles, horizontal networks and bonds, which according to the literature on social movement theory become the fabric of social movements.

A very particular dimension of Yemen's civil society, which anthropological and political science literature address, is the daily Qat chew gatherings. While Sheila Carapico (1998) analogizes such gatherings to American focus groups, Shelagh Weir (1985) likens them to a "kind of institutionalized grapevine" in which information about local and national affairs gets exchanged. For Lisa Wedeen (2003), on the other hand, the gatherings are like the 19th century Salons of Europe. According to Wedeen, in addition to solidifying business deals, choosing village sheikhs, and resolving local troubles, qat gatherings enable the exchange of important information and knowledge about political positions and alliances. Furthermore, local politicians and important officials make use of these gatherings to meet with constituents, and legal experts make use of them to promulgate legal judgments. Remarkably, these daily qat gatherings are open to anyone who wants to participate in the discussions, as long as he brings his own qat. This means that guests are not a financial burden on the host. During my field research, these gatherings were the right place for me to have direct access to officials, leading members of political parties, tribal leaders, journalists, prominent religious figures, activists and even academics. They were also ideal locations for collecting political rumors and facts. Amazingly, it is easy for almost everyone to discover at which gathering officials and public figures will be present and nobody in these

gatherings questions the presence of anyone else. For Wedeen, these gatherings are everyday practices, which encourage the articulation of radical critiques, especially since the electoral process has come to be seen, since the 1994 civil war, as "a way of containing populist politics rather than enabling its expression". She further notes that the accessibility of officials and the openness of these everyday qat sessions are qualities suggestive of the horizontal aspects of Yemeni public life. In short, qat gatherings are important sites of civil society action, where active political arguments regarding the understandings of sovereign authority are made and contemporary affairs get negotiated. In this respect, Wedeen (2003) argues that despite the fact that the proliferation of such gatherings can "be historically situated in changes of capital accumulation in the boom period of the 1970s, neither the bust period of the 1980s nor the constriction of formal electoral politics since 1994 has diminished the frequency or diluted the content of these gathering".

The second particularistic issue in the civil society debate in the Middle East is civil society-Islam relations. In the light of the political developments in Iran, Turkey, Egypt and Algeria, authors argue that civil society has served as the base from which Islamists launched their impressive challenge to the political status quo (Berman, 2003; Wickham, 2002; Abdo, 2000). Other scholars, however, for instance, Wiktorowicz and Farouki (2000), argue that Islamic NGOs differ from Islamist groups that seek participation in political processes. According to them, these NGOs are not engaged in political lobbying, and their activities are focused on development issues. Janine Clark (2004), on the other hand, refutes the assumption that the activities of Islamic NGOs are purely apolitical and focus only on building social networks with the poor. Drawing from her research findings in Yemen, Jordan and Egypt, Clark argues that many of the activities of these NGOs are not based on patron-client relations between the NGOs and

the poor masses. Rather, many of the activities are targeting the politicized middle class. Sarah Roy, in her study on the Islamic civil society organizations in Gaza, puts forward a different argument. According to Roy (2000), the objective of Palestinian Islamic NGOs " is not the creation of an Islamic society so much as the building of a society that is more Islamic, a society imbued with Islamic values as a form of protection against all forms of aggression, and as the basis for growth and progress". Reviewing the literature on Islamic civil society in the region illustrates that neither individualism nor liberal democratic institutions are necessary for civil society to exist. The basis for a civil society in the Muslim world is, according to Kamali (2001), the existence of influential civil groups and their organization that can counterbalance state power. An interesting example can be drawn here from Clark's study of Islamist women in Yemen. According to her, Islamic activism of women within the Islah political party takes place through the Islah Charitable Society, where *Nadwas*, Quranic study groups provides female activists with informal institutional resources and micro mobilization contexts. In this way, Yemeni Islamist women can participate in forms of activism without being directly tied to formal movement organizations (Clark, 2004). Finally, in an attempt to explain the delayed revolt of civil society in the region, authors point to the influence of Western strategic interests in the region as the reason behind such a delay. Borhan Ghalioun, for instance, argues that the infrastructure of rentierism and the bolstering of repressive regimes by the West made Arab regimes autonomous from their populations and "decades of tyranny and exclusion have left Arab civil societies highly disorganized" (Ghalioun, 2004). Other effective techniques used by the state to undermine the emergence of strong civil society include, among others: the patronising of pseudo-civil society organizations, and the the control of media organizations, including self censorship.

The panoramic explanation of Mehran Kamrava is useful for concluding my review of civil society approach. On the basis of classifying the political systems in the region into Exclusionary States, Inclusionary States, Sultanistic States and Civic Myth Monarchies, Kamrava argues that exclusionary states depoliticized society "through repression and enticing fear of political endeavours among the population", while inclusionary ones have "diverted popular political energies into projects that actually sustain the very basis of the regime". Sultanistic states, on the other hand, "have been able to effectively placate demands for political participation and accountability", and the civic myth monarchies "have found it necessary to embark on limited but highly trumpeted processes of political liberalization" (Kamrava, 1998). With this classification in mind, the diverse cast of Arab political systems has appropriated Arab civil society and each has endowed civic activism with a different meaning, purpose and representation.

2. 5 Political Islam Approach: The Best Selling Approach

A river of ink has already flowed in the endless debates over the role of Islam in modernization and democracy. The vast and varied spectrum of scholarly works on the role of Islam in the process of political modernization (PPM), which have accumulated during the last three decades, can be briefly divided into two main traditions. The first of which presumes a serious conflict between Islam and democracy (Pipes, 1983; Sivan, 1990). According to this tradition, Islamic values contain something inherently undemocratic that makes it impossible for Islamic societies to develop Western culture's dualism of church and state, spiritual and temporal authority. The second tradition argues that there are ample grounds for scepticism regarding the claim that democracy conflicts with Islam (Tessler, 2002; Esposito & Voll, 1996). To support this

argument, advocates of this tradition often point to the Islamic concepts of *shoura* (consultation), *ijtihad* (independent interpretive judgment) and *ijma* (consensus) and how such concepts are very compatible with democracy. However, there's a fundamental problem in the nature of much of the debate between these two traditions – namely, the contrasting of the norms, values and core assumptions of Arab/Muslim societies with Western assumptions of political modernization. This approach misses the point that the key to understanding the characteristics of the Arab/Muslim attempts at transition to democracy and political pluralism lies in the type and context of state-society relations in the region, not in the type and context of Muslim societal norms, values and assumptions. The approach misses also the fact that Arab authoritarian regimes have made use of Islam as a legitimacy resource that perpetuates the clash of civilisations thesis. It's not Islam, therefore, that makes the Arab Middle East resistant to Huntington's waves of democracy and to the post Cold War winds of socio-political change; rather, it's the region's authoritarian regimes that don't allow room for dissent and fail to provide the majority of their citizens with civil and political rights.

In what follows, a summary and a brief assessment of the current accumulated state of knowledge on the role of Islam in the PPM shall be carried out. To bring the essence of this knowledge to the surface, and to detect the conflicting points of view expressed by different authors, and the relations of these views with the study of the PPM in the region, the review is divided into two historical periods: (1) 1970s-1990s, (2) 1990s-the post September 11 world.

2.5.1 *The 1970s-1990s Phase: the Search for Explanations*

The rise of Islamic movements in the 1970s posed a serious challenge to analysts of the Arab political systems. Coming to the attention of Western political

scientists with the Iranian Revolution (Bari, 1986; Bill, 1984), the mobilization of these movements generated one major question: What are the reasons for the revival and growing support of Islamist movements in the region? Many of the answers were constructed on the basis of conventional explanations that have seen political Islam as a response to socio-cultural and economic factors. Nazih Ayubi (1991), for instance, argues that Islamist movements are “manifestations of and a reaction to a development crisis in the Muslim part of the Third World...and they are almost all composed of the upwardly mobile, formally educated and recent urbanised youth...whose sense of 'relative deprivation' may explain much about their general anxiety and about the adoption of religion as a goal replacement mechanism”. Esposito (1984), Hunter (1988) and Munson (1988), on the other hand, explained the rise of Islamist movements as a response to the cultural invasion and economic and political domination of the Western world over the Arab/Muslim world.

In addition to development and cultural-related factors, youth alienation and the post 1967 Naksa’s search for authentic identity were also cited as the major driving force behind the phenomena of political Islam (Dessouki, 1982; Ibrahim, 1988; Kepel, 1985; Waltz, 1986; 1994; Tessler, 1993). The popular slogan of Islamists in this period was ‘Islam is the Solution’ for solving all problems of modernization, governance and democracy in the region. The adoption of such an ambiguous slogan reflects how theocratic conceptions of Muslim polity were dominant in the political thinking of Islamist movements in the region during this period. Other authors in this period doubted the use of diffused factors such as westernization to explain the rise of Islamism in Arab countries. Roberts (1988), for instance, went so far to the extent that he 'perceived' the rise of radical political Islam in Algeria to be linked to Boumedienne’s program of radical social reforms. The launching of Algeria’s socialist

revolution, which included an agrarian revolution, in the early 1970s, stimulated, according to Roberts, the opposition of landowners and conservatives who mobilized the masses to attack the regime's left-turn in Islamic terms.

2.5.2 The Phase of the 1990s-the Post Cold War and September 11 Worlds

In this period, the literature on political Islam focuses on surveying and analyzing the patterns of interactions between Islamist movements and the regimes in the region, with much attention paid to state-Islamists strategies in dealing with each other. In other words, the post Cold War literature on political Islam focus less on why radical or fundamental Islamism has emerged than on how Islamist movements seek and practice power at different periods in different locations in the region. A number of reasons are behind this shift of focus: 1) The cautious move of regimes in the region towards pluralism and the impact of such a move on the inclusion of Islamic movements. 2) The dramatic events in the 1990 elections in Algeria. 3) Sudan's 1989 Islamists-military coup. 4) The rise of anti-regime militant Islamism in Egypt. 5) The rise of the political, military and social role of Hezbollah in Lebanon, and 6) The participation of Islamists in Parliamentary elections in the region (Moussalli, 1998; Ta'ha, 1993; Martimer, 1991; Shararah, 1996; Abu-Amoud, 1992; Guazzone, 1995; Roy, 1994; Lngohr, 2001).

The body of literature in this phase is distinguished by its undermining of the poverty and deprivation-based explanations of political Islam. As Janse (1997) puts it: "Islamic fundamentalism is not a protest against being poor. To think so is simply unsophisticated. Poverty cannot cause fundamentalism. Prosperity does not cure it. Moreover, fundamentalism is not about taking scripts literally. It is a set of beliefs that draws modern power into the realm of religion; it offers a religious approach to political

power". To question the connection between relative deprivation and the rise of Islamist fundamentalism in the region, authors refer to the rise of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt in the 1920-30s, and radical Islamism in Jordan, Syria and Algeria in the 1960s-1970s, and how these developments took place in periods of time, which were not characterized as that of an acute economic crisis (Moaddel, 2002). The literature also downplays the significance of the role of Islamic political culture in political modernization. The work of Rex Brynen & Others (1995), for instance, shows that political behaviour and the political attitudes of the people in the region are shaped to a large extent by the political not the cultural context.

Other scholars suggested that the very nature of the Arab state is at the heart of the rise of Islamism (Ayubi, 1995; Tripp. 1996). These authors argue that the failure of 'hybrid' and 'premature' Arab states, and Arab elite's deployment of emotive themes to 'authenticate' and 'indigenise' their power, have provided Islamists with the opportunities to form a counter-hegemonic ideology, and for the "conscious Islamic groups" to oppose state's power and legitimacy and raise their voices in criticizing the basics of the state. Norton (1995), on the other hand, argues that Islamist movements are filling a vacuum created by the authoritarian Arab state. He further explains that "whereas independent political parties, associations, and clubs have been stifled by state controls, the mosque is much more difficult to police. It is relatively simple to outlaw a party, but the Muslim state can no more shut down a mosque than a North American or European government can lock the doors of a church". Burgat (1993) in his study of political Islam in the North African component of the Arab world, see, however, the revival of Islamist movements as a part of the independence movements of the Arab states and the legacy of the colonial experience in the region. According to them, the roots of these movements are traced in the post independence period when the colonial

administrations handed over political power to authoritarian military elites, and thus prepared the fertile ground for Islamist groups.

A similar line of argument is detected in Kepel's (1993) study of Muslim extremism in Egypt, in which he argues that the rise of radical Islamism is related to the rise of authoritarianism following the military coup of 1952, and the imprisonment and torture of most of the leaders of the Muslim Brothers.

Other explanations relate the phenomenon of political Islam to globalization (Roy, 2004), modernity and modernization. Lapidus (1997), for instance, argues that the phenomenon is a response to the conditions of modernization and at the same time it is a cultural expression of modernity. Denoeux (2002) elaborates further on this argument and notes the following two-sided relation of Islamists to modernity. "On the one hand, at the very heart of Islamist ideology lies a powerful, comprehensive critique of the West and of what Islamists see as the corrupting political and cultural influence of the West on Middle Eastern societies". On the other hand, political Islam is a modern phenomenon in at least two critical respects: the background of its leaders and its reliance on Western technology. Profiling the ideologues of Islamist movements reveals, according to Denoeux, that they are products of the modern educational system. Even the cadres of radical Islamist groups are university-educated, and many of them are graduates of faculties of modern sciences, not theology or humanities, and some have studied in the western world.

Recent literature on the topic draws our attention to the relation between the rise of middle-class based Islamic movements on the one hand and the relative decline of traditional class-based movements -- peasant organizations, cooperative movements and trade unions on the other. In the words of Bayat (2003), "as peasants have moved to the city from the countryside, or lost their land to become rural day labourers, the social

basis of peasant and cooperative movements has eroded". The emerging impoverished urban middle classes channelled their discontent, therefore, into "the Islamist movements in general, and the politicization of professional syndicates in particular".

In light of the recent militant confrontations between Arab regimes and Islamists, and the fact that Islamists have become the strongest opposition movement with highly supportive popular constituencies, many authors invested intellectual energy in identifying and analysing the strategies applied by the state and Islamists in dealing with each other. Generally speaking, in their dealing with the state, Islamists adopted two main strategies: Compliance and Violence. According to Ibrahim (2005), the core of the first strategy is accepting the ruling systems, and participating in legalized peaceful political action. Such participation takes the form of joining political parties, taking part in elections inside professional syndicates, and providing social services to the masses. Examples, with varying degrees and organization, include the Muslim Brothers (MB) in Egypt, the MB and Islamic Action Front in Jordan, the pre-1992 Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, Nahda (Renaissance) Party in Tunis, Hizbollah in Lebanon, and Islah (reform) in Yemen. The latter, as discussed in Chapter Five of this present study, is a coalition of tribal and Islamist groups established in 1990, and considered the strongest and most influential opposition party in the country (Faksh, 1997; Dunn; Mustafa, 1992). The second strategy adopted by Islamists was the use of violence as a mean of toppling down Arab regimes, e.g. Jemaah *Islamiah* and *Jihad* in Egypt, Islamic Salvation Army and Militant Islamic Group in Algeria. Such Islamist strategies, whether militant or peaceful, are based on tactical considerations rather than abstract theocratic principles. The Arab state, on the other hand, interacted with Islamic movements on the basis of three different strategies: Exclusion, Accommodation and Coalition. The exclusion strategy has been adopted by Syria, Egypt, Tunis and Algeria.

The strategy is based, mainly, on armed confrontation, in addition to mass arrests and police harassment. The non-militant steps, which Arab states took in the field of development and modernization, as measures of quelling the renewed influence of Islamists in society, are of interest to this present study. For example, the upgrading of urban low-income settlements, the provision of infrastructure to rural areas, the expansion of state control over the mosques, the expansion and reforming of the educational system, and the projects of automation of civil records. Two examples of the latter projects are the new serial number-based electronic identity cards in Egypt, and the computerization of passport and immigration processes in Yemen. In light of these new state-led projects, I am willing to argue here that the serious threat posed by Islamists played a role in enhancing the penetration capacity of the Arab state. In other words, threat promoted political modernization and development in the region. The threat here is not only security related but also legitimacy related. Observers of the region have already noted that the social services, which Islamist movements provide, and the response of Islamists to social needs at times of emergency[5], highlighted the state's inability and further weakened its legitimacy. A glance at Arab regimes, which have adopted the exclusion strategy, reveals that they might have succeeded at the security front. Their adoption of exclusion strategy, however, has seriously weakened the state's legitimacy; inflamed the civil conflict; radicalized the Islamic movement and its constituency and made the state become more and more autocratic (Kozak, 2004).

This means that in the confrontation with Islamist groups, the Arab state achieved a mixed result: progress in the field of development and institutional capacity, and further pushing backwards in the field of democracy and human rights. The hybrid nature of political trajectories in the modern Arab political systems seems to appear often at the surface of the Middle Eastern political aquarium.

The second strategy is accommodating Islamists. Jordan and Yemen are the best two examples in this regard. In the two countries, Islamists have been accommodated inside the volatile political space to counterbalance leftist political orientations in society, and regimes-Islamists accommodation has been characterized by ebb and flow. The regimes of the two countries have used state-managed political openings to accommodate Islamists in such a way that sustain regime survival and hegemony. A retrospective look at the Islamic Action Front (IAF) in Jordan and the Islah party in Yemen shows that both parties have no history of opposing the regime directly. In fact their history reveals that they have actively supported the regimes from time to time. Interestingly, the accommodation of Islamists in the two countries took place during a time when neither Jordan nor Yemen was experiencing widespread popular demands for liberalization reforms. However, while the IAF has become more moderate over time, the Islah party has not. Moderation here means "a change in ideology from a rigid and closed worldview to one relatively more open and tolerant of alternative perspectives" (Schwedler, 2006). The Yemeni state's accommodation of the Islah, as discussed further in this present study, is illustrative of the accommodation logic between the Arab state and Islamists. The accommodation of Islah was a part and parcel of Salih's regime efforts to counterbalance the power of the YSP, Yemen Socialist Party, during the first years of unification. Founded in 1990 as an Islamic-tribal political party by Sheikh Al-Zindani, who was the head of the Muslim Brotherhood's branch in Yemen and a designated 'terrorist' by Washington, and by the late Sheikh Hussein Al-Ahmar, the most influential tribal leader of the Hashid Confederation, the same confederation to which the tribe of Ali Abdullah Salih belongs. The Islah is a fusion of the most powerful camps in Yemen's socio-political arena: the religious and tribal ones. In light of this, it was impossible for the Yemeni regime not to accommodate such a powerful

party in one way or another. The pro-regime politics of the Islah were exposed under the glaring sun of Yemen during the 1994 civil war, when the religious wing of the Islah issued fatwas prohibiting reconciliation with the southern secessionists and sanctioning their killing. Interestingly, this regime-Islah-tribe formula is an excellent reflection of Ibn Khaldun's argument that religion creates a bond of unity that is capable of filling the void created by the weakening of ruler-ruled links, and the decline of *asabiyha* (Hourani, 1983). The Jordanian case, on the other hand, mirrors the ebb and flow in the state's strategy of accommodation. After a short honeymoon with the regime in 1989, which resulted in the Islamist winning of 27 percent of the seats in the Parliament, the regime's restrictions on the Islamic Action Front Party in the legislative elections of June 2003, and the March 2005 law, which banned Islamist-dominated syndicates from engaging in politics, demonstrate the rapidly changing nature of Arab state-Islamists accommodation strategy (Ottaway & Hamzawy, 2008). The third state strategy is based on creating coalitions between the ruling elites and the Islamists. Two experiments of such coalitions took place in the Arab Middle East. The first was in Sudan, following the June 1989 military coup, which brought the Bashir-Turabi coalition government to power. At domestic policy level, the one-decade long Islamists-military coalition was characterized by intense political rift between the two camps and the lack of clarity regarding who exactly ruled Sudan. At the foreign policy level, it was clear, however, that the agenda was set by the hard line Islamists. This in turn has drawn the wrath of the USA, the resentment of African countries and isolation of Sudan in the Arab League. In 2000, the coalition was brought to end by the power of Bashir's guns over Turabi's words (Fluehr-Lobban & Lobban, 2001; Sidahmed, 1999). The second coalition with the Islamists took place in Yemen. As discussed elsewhere in this present study, it was the defeat of the YSP in the 1994 civil war, which made Salih's regime

create the space and opportunity for the Islah to fill the void and share with the GPC the burden of government in the economically, politically and socially problematic post civil war period. The coalition survived for less than three years. The dramatic victory of the GPC in the 1997 elections made the coalition with Islah not necessary, thus no Islah members were offered cabinet portfolios and tension in the relations between the Islamists and the GPC pushed the Islah to seek tactical coalition with the opposition, which is dominated by the Left. While marginalizing the Islah party, Salih's regime, however, maintained good links with the leaders of the tribal camp inside the Islah. By so doing, the regime has succeeded in drawing a wedge between the Islamist and tribal camps. In short, the Sudanese and Yemeni experiences of coalition reflect the victory and the upper hand of the ruling elites over the Islamists, and the failure of the latter to change political realities or to govern without the military support, as in the case of Sudan, or without the tribal support, as in the case of Yemen. In light of this failure, most of the Islamist movements in the region have shifted towards more pragmatism in politics.

It is worth noting here that the post September 11 neoconservative debate on the role of Islam in shaping modernization and the mode of governance in the region is Kedouriean in nature and centers on how Islam rejects secularity, democracy and sovereignty of the modern state. In this debate, however, no distinction is made between the different theorizing and understanding of the political role of Islam among radicals, progressives, conservatives and modernists in the Arab/Muslim world. Gudrun Kramer (1993), for instance, notes how the Muslim Brothers and a large number of *Ulama* hold the idea that God left the details of political organization to the Muslim community to decide according to its needs. In other words, there is an agreement among different schools of Islam that "the precise form of government is left to human reason to

define". Kramer constructs such an argument on the basis of the distinction that the Islamic legal theory (*fiqh*) makes between the *ibadat (*person's relations with God) and the *mu'amalat* (all other aspects of human life- political, economic and family). Kramer goes further in highlighting how, in the minds of many Islamic thinkers, political leadership is not constructed on religious authority, and that it is no longer a very important issue to call the Muslim ruler a *Caliph*, *Malik* (king), Sultan, *Amir (*Prince), or *Ra'is (*President*).* Surprisingly, such a modern Islamic position is not very far from Huntington's famous argument that "the most important political distinction between countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government" (Huntington, 1968).

To conclude, political Islamic approach mirrors the cluster of social, economic, cultural, development and political crises in the modern Arab political systems. It also reflects the feedings of western geopolitical interests to these crises. The Islamist movements have changed the Arab states, by rendering them more religious. Regimes in the region have become more obliged to maintain the public image of puritanical behaviour, because, as Mohammad Ayoob (2007) recently observed, public deviation of the regimes from the code of religious morality open the regimes up to criticism and denunciation that are couched in religious terminology. The religious dress of the Arab state is quite clear in the state-funded construction of mega mosques, the state-sponsored celebrations of Islamic events, the affirmation of Arab political systems that Islam is the original and main source of law, the appearance of Arab political leaders on TV cameras performing the Friday's prayer, and the state-led protest to any manifestations or practices that are deemed offensive to Islam. Furthermore, every state in the region has developed its own version of 'official Islam' to help serve its interests and even "to check those of competing states". According to Sadiq al-Azm (2008),

"official state Islam proved to be an indispensable ally and help meet of the West throughout the Cold War – particularly its most literal, scripturalist and rigorous readings, forms and applications. Thus, this Islam and the West know each other very well, understand each other very well and know how to cooperate very well". The rich literature on political Islam shed much light on the following four issues that are of interest to researchers of political modernization in the region: 1) political conflict over the state's legitimacy, 2) religious political parties, 3) Islamic alternative of governance, and 4) the relations between political opening, pluralism and Islamist movements. In the post September 11 world, the latter issue has become unavoidably central to political scientists, Arab regimes and Washington-based policy makers alike (Burgat, 2003; Witts, 2008; Carothers & Ottaway, 2005; Bayat, 2007). The case of political Islam-state relations in Yemen, as will be discussed later in this research, bridges the two political strategies of accommodation and coalition.

CONCLUSIONS

Researchers of the process of political modernization (PPM) in the region have been systemically seeking categories of inquiry and analytic concepts that are sensitive enough to permit meaningful understanding and comparison of the political consequences of modernization in the Middle East. This chapter has attempted to chronicle, summarise and assess the diverse research findings regarding the PPM in the region, with a focus on its Arab component. What these findings reveal is that there is a need for contextualising analysis to be applied to the question of how the PPM in the region is described and explained. The review conducted in this chapter demonstrates how official western

ideology seeps into the narrative structure of modernization studies in the Middle East. It also shows how theorists of political modernization during the last five decades have disagreed over whether to focus on micro-behavioural or macro-structural dimensions, whether to analyse the internal or external factors, and whether to pay attention to the political culture or economic determinism. Such divergences continue to shape today's explanatory factors in modernisation, development and social change in the Arab world.

In the post Cold War climate, amid manifold evidence of plural forms of political modernization, studies on the PPM in the Arab Middle East have undergone major changes in terms of the theoretical perspectives, analytical approaches and methodological techniques. As a result, generalisations about political life in the Arab world have become difficult to justify. One of the main findings of this review is that democratization has supplanted modernization as the discourse of political, economic and socio-cultural transformation in the Arab Middle East. In other words, the notion of political underdevelopment has replaced the notion of economic underdevelopment.

In the aftermath of the attacks of September 11 and the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, the potential for political modernization in the pattern of authoritarianism in the Arab Middle East has become the subject of great interest. The subject ties in to questions regarding the political face of Islam, and, in a comparative context of democratization studies, the nature of transition and pluralism, the role and prospects of civil society, the links between economic development and economic liberalization on the one hand, and political liberalization and democratization on the other, and the role of the international system in general and that of the U.S. in particular. Furthermore, in exploring the conditions for democratization in the region, as antidote against radical Islamism, much of the recent relevant scholarly literature is engaged with the task of finding answers to a very important political modernization-related question: what has

sustained and may continue to sustain authoritarian rule in Arab political systems? The question has stimulated the generation of much investigation and triggered an avalanche of debates at the scholarly, policy-making, intelligentsia, media, and popular levels. As a result, no process of political modernization in a region has received and still receives such a wide-scale attention and significance than the one in the Arab Middle East.

At the research front, the persistence of authoritarianism in Arab political systems has caused students of the PPM in the region to isolate each possible factor behind such persistence in an attempt to determine the primary cause(s) for the wide gap between the impressive socio-economic transformations on the one hand and the lagging behind political consequences of modernization on the other. The available answers and arguments regarding this regional gap are of direct relevance not only for western policy makers but also for future researching of Arab political systems. At the present, the review I made of the widely dispersed scholarly literature on the topic reveals to me the need to move as far as possible from abstract modelling of the PPM to a wider and more open-ended approach that is constructed on the basis of analysing the national, regional and international contextual determinants of political modernization in each Arab country. In other words, researchers of political modernization, in fact of all political trajectories, in the region should be equipped with tools of contextualization, and get down to cases, whatever the cost to generality, certainty and intellectual equilibrium. The review also revealed that there are no previous works, in Arabic or English, which focus on studying the impact of state-society relations on political modernization through the use of a more macro inclusive approach. The case of state-society relations in Yemen does not fit very well either with modernization theory or with the application of one or more of the four reviewed approaches. The Yemeni

regime, for instance, mixes, as the following chapters illustrate, the military, tribalism, Islam, political pluralization and democratization.

CHAPTER THREE

Modernizing a Fragile Arab State: The Dilemma of External-Internal Interactions

INTRODUCTION

The operation of politics and power are often associated with the activities of the state. Viewed in these terms, the state, wherever found, is perceived as the arena of politics and the key actor in aggregating and deploying legitimate institutional power. Modernizing such an arena involves, according to Huntington (1966), the rationalization of authority, the development of new institutions- equipped to deal with the new administrative, legal and security responsibilities of the state, and finally, democratization and the increasing of political participation. Huntington notes that

carrying out these three main political changes result in distinguishing the modern political community from the traditional familial, ethnic and religious political authorities. Leftwich (2008), on the other hand, argues that the central function of the modern state has been to establish the institutional framework for the management and maintenance of the shift from agrarian to industrial society, and all the socio-economic and political complexities that that has entailed. In this sense, the success or failure of a modern state is based on its performance as the mediating body between the constraints and challenges of the international arena and the dynamism of its particular domestic socio-cultural, economic and political realities. In the case of united Yemen, however, despite the physical existence of all the necessary modern government institutions in the form of specialized agencies, the state remains a fragile entity that is unable to project and assert its direct authority and power in many parts of its internationally recognized borders.

This chapter concerns itself with investigating the pattern and dynamics of political modernization at state level in Yemen. For the purpose of the chapter, modernization of the state means the transformation in the political infrastructure of the state from indirect to direct centralized rule. Understood in this generic sense, the chapter focuses on state building as one of the most essential elements in the process of political transformation induced by modernization.

In the context of the fragility of the Yemeni state, three questions guide this chapter. First, what is the path of state transformation in Yemen? Second, compared to other Arab states, what explains the different pattern of state building in Yemen? Third, what explains the durability of Salih's regime (1978-2009) despite state weakness? To answer these questions, the following pages discuss the theoretical debate regarding the building of the modern Arab state, trace the roots of state institutions in the modern

history of united Yemen, and explore the divergent paths and convergent patterns of state building in the North, South and United Yemeni states. The chapter clusters around one major preoccupation: the relationship between external factors and state building in the Arab Middle East.

3.1 Building the Modern Arab State: Theoretical Considerations

Theoretically, in dealing with the building of the modern Arab state, it's important to keep the following observations in mind. First, the modern Western state, which is the blue-print for the post colonial Arab state, is an institution that is both a product and agent of the transformation from agrarian to industrial societies[6]. From a Western point of view, such an institution is the outcome of an integrative social process emanating 'from within', and it is a distinct institution that comes forth of an organic process of socio-cultural integration, which leads to the centralization of political authority, standardization of the legal code, sovereignty and citizenship. In addition to being the dominant agency of rule and law, such an institution represents the society at a whole (Giddens, 1995), and its fundamental role is to govern in such a manner that protects and promotes the collective interests of all segments in society. In many parts of the Arab Middle East, however, the state is largely the result of a disintegrating and disharmonizing process that was imposed 'from without', and its foundations are based on parallel social entities (Ayubi, 1996).

Second, the precise theoretical definition of the state, regardless of its geographical or cultural location, is complex and difficult to pin down in a neat definition. This is, mainly, because the state is not a physical entity. Instead, it is an idea that has emerged in many forms throughout human history. Sometimes such an idea has

been perceived as the ideal expression of society, as in Plato's “The Republic”. At other times, it has been treated as a parasite riding on the back of Society, as in Rothbard's “For a New Liberty”. The theoretical challenge gets bigger if one takes into consideration the sharp divide in political science and political philosophy between the attitudes of liberals and statists towards the state. The latter view the weakness of the state, and rolling it back as the prime potential problem. Order, authority, state provision of public services and autonomy, according to them, are the most essential for governance. The potential problem for liberals, on the other hand, is state power. For them, such a power constitutes a threat to the freedom and even the well being of citizens. They put emphasis, therefore, on democracy, participation, and legal arrangements that protect citizens from the state.

The following are a few more examples that reflect further the deep division of philosophical and political attitudes towards the state. The examples illustrate how defining the state on the basis of a commonality that exists between all states is a major challenge, and how the meaning of the state can shift dramatically according to the theoretical perspective of the speaker:

Franz Oppenheimer (1975), for instance, defines the state as the summation of privileges and dominating positions. In his classic work, ‘the State’, Oppenheimer contrasts what he calls the ‘political means’ of the state with the ‘economic means’ of society. The state, according to him, uses its political means to plunder and exploit the economic means of society. For Max Weber, on the other hand, the state is a “compulsory political association with continuous organization [whose] administrative staff successfully upholds a claim to the monopoly of legitimate use of force in the enforcement of its order”. Weber perceives the state as a neutral entity that emerges within the context of a general sociological process. Such an entity rationalizes society

according to legal rules and principles. The latter constitute the essence of the state. Coercive force comes, therefore, as a necessity to protect and maintain society's welfare.

Karl Marx, however, analyzed the state as an agency of class warfare by which the capitalists controlled the workers. For him, the state is an expression and protector of one class or segment of society at the expense of another segment. Marx considered the society's mode of production as the basic foundation on which the political and other institutions arise. Accordingly, the state as a political institution is, for him, a manifestation of the dominant mode of production within the society. The state in pursuing its policy becomes, therefore, not neutral but fully guided by the interests of this class. In other words, state's mode of governance is the political expression of class interest. Echoing Marxist analysis, Gramsci treats the state as the "entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only maintains its dominance but also manages to win the consent of those over whom it rules." For him, the state is the "political society plus civil society". In short, there is a lack of consensus amongst political and philosophical theorists as regards the meaning of the state. Such a lack led to the emergence of different theories and even histories of state formation.

On which terms and from which theoretical corner, should we define and frame, the Arab state- Weberian or Marxist? No answer to such a grand question can be generalized at Arab world level, simply because Arab states are not basically similar. The effective differences between the socio-economic, historical, cultural and political lives in neighboring Libya, Egypt and Sudan, for example, are much greater than the differences between such lives in, for example, neighboring Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Perhaps the cluster of wealthy Arab Gulf monarchies seems to be the cluster of the most similar Arab states. If we, for the sake of answering the above mentioned

question, examine this cluster, we soon realize that neither the Marxist emphasis on class nor the Weberian “rational-legal” model that focuses on extraction and exchange between the state and society are applicable. In such a cluster, there are no relations to means of production. Instead, there are relations to family, clan, tribe and Islam. In addition, states in such a cluster do not tax their citizens. Instead, they are rentier states that allocate and distribute but do not exchange, and their income, as Hazem Beblawi puts it: is “derived from the gift of nature”(Beblawi, 1990). Understanding the rentier phenomenon is, indeed, a major challenge to students of state formation/building in the region. This is, mainly, because of two reasons: Firstly, there is a wide agreement among political scientists that state building, at its most basic, involves state’s penetration of society in order to extract resources that are essential for performing the functions of the state and for gaining legitimacy. Secondly, the very close relationship between the state and taxation is deeply rooted in the history of European state formation. Pierson (1996), for instance, calls taxation the “touchstone of the politics of the modern state”. In this sense, taxation creates the context for political participation and thus democracy - ‘no taxation without representation’. Political scientists agree that the proposition of fiscal sociologists that the sources of state revenue have a major impact on patterns of state formation/building remains valid and convincing (Moore, 2004). In this sense, the quality of governance in Arab political systems might have improved if these systems were financially more dependent on domestic taxpayers. What complicates the discussion on the rentier behavior in the region, however, is the fact that such a behavior is not confined to the cluster of the wealthy sheikhdoms of Arabia. Instead it has reached and infected the rest of the Arab world. The behavior, according to Beblawi, “cut across the whole of the Arab world, oil rich and oil poor”.

Lisa Andreson (1995), on the other hand, argues that the Arab rentier mode of governance has created in the region "the authoritarian welfare state".

Since the 2nd half of the 1980s, many scholarly attempts were made, by Arab and Western authors, to understand the particularities of state formation/building of Arab states, and the commonalities and differences among them regarding their relations with their societies and the impact of such relations on the mode of governance and the processes of development and modernization in the region (Ghalioun, 1994; Anderson, 1987; Bromley, 1993; Al-Ansari, 1995; Hareeq, 1989; Luciani, 1990; Owen, 1992). These studies advance our understanding of the complicated and mediated linkages between state formation, state building, modernization and economic development in the Middle East. One of the important platforms, which these studies construct for students of the PPM in the region, is the analysis of the political model of institutional change. This model examines the origins of political coalitions on which states and their institutions depend, and demonstrates how elite's coalitions and arrangements shape not only the nature of bureaucracy, fiscal structures, and patterns of economic intervention, but also the dynamics of state-society relations in the region. Another useful argument that is brought to the surface by these studies is the link between late and deformed state formation and the current widening gap between state and society in the Arab world. In short, the recent literature on state building in the region identifies the following factors as the main sources behind the crisis of the Arab state: identity, socio-political integration, legitimacy, economic structure and the dependency on external actors.

The Yemeni case of state formation, as will be illustrated in this chapter, provides an excellent support to the argument that investigating state building in the

region exposes, in addition to the inherited Ottoman, colonial and post colonial diseases of governance, the Arab world's variations in the following areas: 1) history of state formation, 2) sources and degrees of state legitimacy, 3) economic capacity of the state, 4) political capacity of the state to mobilize local resources and population, 5) the socio-economic backgrounds of state elites, 6) the degree of bureaucratic penetration, 7) the nature of state beneficiaries and favored groups, 8) the role of the army in such a relation, and 9) the role of primordial and ascriptive identities in political life. Such deep diversity and differences reveal the illusion of the one Arab political community that is paved from Morocco to Iraq with repeating political units. The deep differences make us realize that the 'political' Arab world is produced, mainly, by the pictorial conventions of our political atlases.

3. 2 State Building in Fragile United Yemen

As one of the prominent observers of Yemen put it, although the two Yemen's have been the location of some of the most momentous upheavals of the modern Arab Middle East, such upheavals, however, used to become noticeable to the outside world, including the Arab one, only when they acquire international significance- Nasser's military intervention, British withdrawal from South Yemen, the Soviet presence, the regional implications of Inter Yemeni conflicts (Halliday, 1985). Lately, Yemen attracted western media for being the site of the attack on the USS Cole, for being the ancestral homeland of Bin Laden, and a 'natural haven' for al-Qaida. On the 22nd of May 1990, however, Yemen attracted the attention of global and regional media by being the site of something unique: the unification of North and South Yemen. Taking place six months after the fall of the Berlin wall, the unification was perceived by the western media as one more victory of a laissez-faire market economy over socialism.

Western commentary assumed, therefore, that as what happened in Germany, Northern Yemeni firms would take over the state sector in South Yemen, and that socialist political ideas were soon to be abandoned and buried in the graveyard of the former USSR. What happened, however, was not a political or economic take over. It was rather an amalgamation of the seemingly two antagonistic economies and political systems. The amalgamation was so antagonistic to the extent that a French author on Yemen described it as unification of East Germany with Afghanistan (Burgat, 2008).

Naturally, the merging of the only Arab Marxist state (the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY)) with a capitalist leaning, and most conservative/tribal Arab state (Yemen Arab Republic (YAR)) generated an avalanche of questions. The main question; however, was: what is next? The next turned out to be a watershed in the political history of the Arabian Peninsula: The marriage of the PDRY and YAR gave birth to unprecedented pluralism and political opening. Surprisingly, although the newest Arab state (Republic of Yemen) was the daughter of the poorest and most peripheralized two Arab states, her first years in life, however, were politically healthier than the post birth period of any other Arab state. The following is an attempt to learn about her unique birth and growth. Bearing in mind the striking similarities between Yemen and Afghanistan, and the ongoing catastrophic failure in building a post Saddam state in Iraq, studying state building in unified Yemen has the potential of providing a number of lessons for those who are interested in understanding state building in the Middle East.

3. 3 Divergent Paths and Convergent Patterns in Two Poor Arab Republics

Already in the 1950 and 1960s, nationalist movements in the former North and South Yemen, espoused the idea of unity between the two divided countries. Despite the strong popular view of most Yemenis that such a division into two separate countries was artificial and imposed, the idea of unity did not materialize even after the departure of British forces from South Yemen in 1967, and the toppling down of the *Zaydi* [7] Imamate in North Yemen in 1962. This is, mainly, because the Ottoman and British division of Yemen was sustained and reinforced by the Cold War. By the 1970s, South Yemen aligned itself with Moscow and the Eastern Camp, while the regime in the North aligned itself with Riyadh and the Western Camp. In addition to the Cold War, regional actors played, also, an important role in sustaining the decade's long inter-Yemeni tensions. Such tensions were manifested in the support of both countries to the opposition forces, and even rebellions, within each other's territory. The ultimate manifestation of such tensions, however, took place in the form of sabotages, political assassinations[8] and two major border wars in 1972 and 1979. Oddly enough, both wars ended with a reaffirmation of the two countries commitment to unity and by signing treaties that elaborate steps towards Yemeni unification. This wide swinging between war and promises of unity illustrates the shifting and confusing patterns in the relationship between the two Arab republics. Some observers of the Yemeni political arena attribute such confusion to the inherited bad fit between state(s) and nation(s) (Burrowes, 1991) in both countries.

But why such a long delay of unification despite the fact that the call for unity has been always a declared goal in the political agenda of North Yemen, and "an enduring component" of South Yemen's foreign policy (Haliday, 1985) According to Gause (1988), the delay is attributed, mainly, to the opposing political structures in the two countries. Such structures acted as the instrumental barrier for normalizing their

relations in such a way that leads to their unification. Dr al-Iryani, the former Foreign Minister and Prime Minister of Yemen in the 1980s, attributes, however, the delayed implementation of unity to the self perception of each Yemen as the guardian of the unity. In other words, both disputed "the claim to represent Yemeni legitimacy", and on the basis of this self-perception, each Yemen interfered in the affairs of the other and thus prolonging hostility and delaying unity. Looking back at the road to unity that both countries took, we can identify the following main crossings: Enthusiasm for cooperation, high tensions, wars, reconciliation and finally unity in May 1990. Bearing in mind that the concept of political unification in such a part of the Middle East has been as rare as the rain in the desert of Arabia, and against the background of such a long history of turbulence between the two countries, the unification was, indeed, a major historical and political achievement. One of the most significant features of the achievement was the unique power sharing system, and the high degree of state-society bargaining in the new unified republic. How was this possible and what made two antagonistic Arab regimes adopt democratic values and share power with their societies, without any pressure from Washington? Prior to answering the question, let us first try to find out why two politically inassimilable Arab states have arisen in a single cultural historical region, why has the divergence in political evolution between the two Yemen's occurred, and what effect has this divergence had on state building in both countries?

Tracing the political history of the two Yemen's reveals how such a history is centuries older than that of the rest of today's states in the Arabian Peninsula. In fact, Yemen is one of the only five Arab countries[9] in which the state as an institution is not a recently imported product. Historically, in addition to the Nile Valley and Mesopotamia, Yemen represents one of the core historic civilizations around which the

modern Middle East is built. People of Yemen are aware of this, and such awareness makes them share a distinctive national identity that separates them from the rest of the people in the Peninsula. The awareness of their pre-Islamic civilization makes them also consider the newly established Arab Gulf nation-states as "unsophisticated nouveaux riches" (Peterson, 1984). The strongly distinguished Yemeni identity is also nourished by the long tradition of dividing the Arabian Peninsula into *hadar* (settled/urban) and *badu* (nomads). Today, this historic division of the Arabian Peninsula "has been compounded by oil". The term 'Yemen' itself is considerably older than are aspirations for a modern nation-state. For instance, there are repeated invocations of the term *Yaman* in the *hadith* (Traditions of the Prophet Mohammed) to indicate the territory south of Mecca, and there is centuries-old identification of various local literatures and practices as explicitly *Yamani.*

The southwest corner of Arabia is, indeed, one of the Middle Eastern spots that mirror the radical, political and socio-economic transformation of the region during the last century. Comparing the map of today's Arab Peninsula with that in the early 20th century reveals in a very clear manner the transformation in the character of states in the region. For example, the Saudi provinces of Jizan, Asir and Najran were parts of Yemen until Ibn Saud annexed them permanently to Saudi Arabia following Yemen's defeat in the 1934 Saudi-Yemeni war.

According to Peterson (1991), two types of state formation in the Arabian Peninsula can be identified today: longstanding proto-states and tribal states. Yemen and Oman belong to the former category, while the rest of the states in the Peninsula belong to the latter. Historians of the Middle East attribute the sustainability of proto-states in the Peninsula to the sectarian role of the Zaydi imamate in Yemen and the Ibadi's[10] in Oman. One of the important consequences of the long exclusion and

isolation of these two sects from the mainstream of Islamic history was the development of early religio-political states.

In the case of Yemen, the over one thousand years old dominance of Zaydim resulted in producing and sustaining a minimalist state system whose imam was elected from one of the *sayyid*[11] families. Despite the archaic base of the Zaydi political structure, it was, however, a unique structure in the sense of being based on a central authority. The latter was an unknown phenomenon in the strongly fragmented tribal structure of Arabia. Undoubtedly, the role of Zaydi Imams was influential in shaping the modern political history of Yemen. Taking into consideration that Zaydis made up four-fifths of the tribal population in the mountainous half of North Yemen, the imams were the strongest ruling force except during times of foreign occupation (Witty, 2001). The rest of the Yemenis adhered to the Shafi school[12] of Sunni Islam, who lived in urban areas and coastal towns in the south, and made up the majority of the merchant class of Yemen. Although they have accepted the political rule of the Zaydi imams, Sunni Shafis rejected the imams' religious authority. Such a rejection combined with the imams imposed restrictions on commercial activities and external contacts of the Shafi'is, has led to tension between the two sects. The restrictions were not, however, ideologically motivated, but rather to maintain the isolation of Yemen. Some authors refer to the geographically based sectarianism (Zaydi in North Yemen- Shafi' Sunnis in South Yemen) as one of the factors that sustained the YAR-PDRY division. Up until the toppling down of the last Zaydi imam, Muhammed al-Badr, on the 26th of September 1962, the political structure of North Yemen was based on a virtually medieval imamate monarchy. Such a monarchy began consolidating its political base in 1918, when Imam Yahia, following the recognition of the Ottoman rulers of his sovereignty, declared the

creation of the theocratic state of 'Mutawakliat Kingdom'. North Yemen is, therefore, the first independent Arab state.

Between 1918 and 1962, imam Yaha and his successor imam Ahmed resorted to two archaic methods of governance: Hostage System and Tribal Feuds. The former method was based on the imam's holding of sons and brothers of tribal Sheikhs as hostages in Sana'a. In case a tribe opposes the imam's authority, its hostage members are killed. The second technique was applied by fueling and encouraging blood feuds and wars between the tribes. By so doing, tribes were kept in a hostile fragmentation that prevented them from constituting a threat to the imamate (Abu Ghanem, 1991). The Imam's techniques of rewarding, on the other hand, included, among others: 1) the recruitment of tribal soldiers who were relocated to agricultural areas whose inhabitants were forced to provide such soldiers with free food and shelter. 2) Allowing tribes that support the Imam against rival groups to loot and plunder the insurgent city/town of such groups for three days (Manea, 1998).

While relations with the external world was based on isolation, the domestic relations between the Imam (state) and society (tribe), at least until the mid-1950s, was based on a theocratic state system through which "the flow of demands and support from society to the imamate and of rewards and commands in the opposite direction was handled, not by specialized political bodies…but informally and face-to-face by officials, notables and family heads" (Burrowes, 1991).

Following the end of World War II, a number of internal and external sources of criticism directed at the imam's isolationist policy made the Imam allow some foreign influences to penetrate Yemen. Among the first signs of such an opening was the joining of North Yemen to the Arab League and United Nations, and the signing of a defense pact with Egypt in 1954. The pact allowed a small number of Egyptian military

advisors to train the Yemeni army. In 1958, Imam Ahmed ibn Yahya (ruled from 1948-62) went even further by joining Egypt and Syria in their United Arab Republic (UAR). He, however, restricted North Yemen's membership in the UAR to defense and foreign policy cooperation. According to Saeed Badeeb (1986) and David Witty (2001), Imam Ahmed's move towards the UAR had two objectives. The first was to "guarantee North Yemen's autonomy from the British protectorate of Aden". The second, however, was to "preempt Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser from targeting North Yemen with his ideas of Arab revolution and Arab socialism". As we shall see later, the Imam's move towards Nasser had the opposite effect from what the imam had hoped.

In short, examining the environment in which the birth of the two republics of Yemen took place reveals how two main political structures covered the littoral, mountain, coastal and desert regions of Yemen - an Imperial British protectorate and a virtually medieval monarchy. In the latter, the leadership of the Zaydi imams has turned Yemen into an isolated theocratic state. By using and abusing the tribal discourse, religion, sectarianism and isolationism as means to political ends, the Zaydi Imamate, or Mutawakiliat Kingdom has carried out a number of centralizing efforts that were far more successful than those carried out by the Ottomans were. In addition, under their leadership, security was enhanced. Compared to the hinterland in South Yemen under the British control, for example, the hinterland of North Yemen was more secure and safer. Bidwell (1983) reflects on this better level of security and notes how Imam Yahya "was so successful that in 1933 the delegates from Aden traveling up to the capital for negotiations ... expressed astonishment at the security and order which prevailed, in striking contrast to the anarchy of most of the Aden Protectorate"(Bidwell, 1983). Although the imams have always relied on their religious authority and tribal organization as the base of their legitimacy, they have also attempted, unsuccessfully, to

use the nationalism card for legitimizing their leadership in the eyes of the Shaf'i Sunnis living in the south under the British occupation. In most of the Imamate's period, territorial ambitions were couched in terms of the Imam's superior virtue, military victories, and his implementation of Justice and the law of God (*iqamat al-adl wa shari'at allah*). Opposition to the Imam and anti-Imamate's movements were depicted by the Imam's administration, therefore, as part of what John Willis calls "a shifting moral geography defined by religious dissension and moral corruption (Willis 2004). In this sense, the political leadership of Imam Yahya was based on blended expressions of Islamic-Zaydi piety with what might be termed 'proto-national' sentiments, which are very much different from the later nationalist rhetoric that emerged in the Arab world. The following reply of Imam Yahya to a mission of religious scholars from Mecca sent by the Ottomans to mediate in 1906-1907, is illustrative of the nature of the Imamate's rule:

> "The land of Yemen was in the hands of our ancestors, the most noble family [i.e. the Prophet's kin], from the third century [of Islam] to the present, and never has there not been a claimant to that right, whether ruling all Yemen or part of it, as is known from the chronicles of Yemen. There were constant battles between our ancestors and those who opposed them, thus opposing the wish of the people (*ahl*) of Yemen to be ruled by their lords and the sons of their Prophet, may God be pleased with them… They have no desire save to order the right and extirpate what is loathsome and reprehensible, to establish the *shari'a*, set straight him who strays, and advise the ignorant" (cited in Dresch, 2000, P.485).

To strengthen their spiritual authority over the Zaydis in the highlands and their temporal authority over the Shaf'i Sunnis, Imam Yahya and his son Ahmed presented themselves as the defenders of Yemen against the Ottomans and the British presence. This, according to Burrowes (1991), "reinforced the traditional base of a nascent modern Yemeni nationalism". In addition to the significance of the sectarian and tribal discourses, the Imams legacy is attributed, also, to the harsh ecology and the

strategically defensible rigid mountains of Yemen that made it extremely difficult for external actors to penetrate and influence the life of the majority of Yemenis. Clearly, preserving this closed semi feudal agrarian society was in the best and widest interests of the imams of Yemen. By the 2nd half of the 20th century, however, cracks in the imamate state were increasing in number and size, and the triangle of Imams, *Sadah* and tribal leaders was coming under severe internal and external pressures.

The view of the socio-political and economic life in the southern uplands and along the coast, on the other hand, stood as a sharp contrast to the one found in the more populous highlands of the northern theocratic Imamate state. At the heart of such a contrast was Aden's British base, established in 1839 as a checkpoint to keep an eye on the Ottomans and Mohamed Ali's ambitions, and to control and safeguard the traffic from the Mediterranean Sea to the jewel of the British Empire-India. The port, however, was later developed into a commercial and service center. By the end of the first world war and the following collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Britain extended its influence beyond Aden and took control of southern Yemen de jure as well as de facto. This British expansion, which was mainly to create a buffering zone between Aden and the Hinterland, marked the formal division of Yemen into North and South.

The modern history of colonial Aden is connected to the 1918 switching of the British navy from coal to oil-powered ships, which in turn made Britain dependent on its main oil supplier - Iran. The nationalist political climate in Iran, however, was against the British plan of constructing a refinery in Iran. As a result, London selected Aden as the alternative site for building the largest petroleum refinery in the region. The transformative impact of the refinery on the socio-economic life in Aden was enormous. According to Carapico (1993), Aden was turned into a major city port with modern infrastructure and services that "attracted a small indigenous capitalist group, a working

class of stevedores and industrial labor, and a small urban middle class, including shopkeepers and intellectuals". This service economy-based city-state was administrated by colonial officers, and managed by Western and Asian expatriates, mainly from India. While Indians were manning the junior executive and clerical positions, British were filling the higher administrative positions. Along with the British, Europeans were managing the mercantile firms and steamship companies. The dominance of the Indian community in the administrative sector gave Aden the name 'Anglo-Indian colony' (Ahroni, 1994). A distinct group among the Indian community was the Baniyans merchants from Gujarat. A large number of Somalis, on the other hand, were recruited in unskilled labor positions, and some of them were involved in importing cattle, sheep and ponies. This colonially imposed heterogeneous social structure was a major source of social conflict. Among the western companies operated in Aden were Shell, BP, Caltex, Mobil, Besse, Cowasagee Dinshaw, Luke Thomas and others. British trading agencies in Aden made vast profits out of the increase in port activities. All facilities of urban services such as banks, health and transport were constructed, mainly, for serving these companies (Al Masri, 1988). For example, out of the 127 miles of paved roads in entire south Yemen, 114 of them were in Aden (Mermeeh, 2008). The imperial investment in education and media has facilitated "the emergence of an influential and substantial middle class" (Manea, 1998), and the maritime and commercial activities attracted labor and merchants from different parts of the world. In 1955, Aden had an estimated population of 138 44, out of which, 103 879, Arabs; 15 817, Indians; 4 484, Europeans; 10 611, Somalis; and 831, Jews. This British-induced demographic transformation has altered the socio-cultural fabric and raised a controversy over the eventual independent state and whose interests it should serve. For instance, the control of the Indian community, especially the Banyans, over trade in

Aden, and their control of bureaucracy have created a hostile attitude from the Arab population towards Indians. The dominance of the Indian culture was so strong to the extent that "government notices were written in English and translated into a form of Arabic that was predominantly Indian in grammer and text" (Muheireze, 1985).

Outside Aden, however, the British adopted a policy of social and political fossilisation, where more than two dozen corrupt local elite sultans and sheikhs owned most of the agricultural lands, and with whom, the British colonial administration signed a number of ‘friendship’ and protection treaties (Al Saraf, 1992). Under these sultans, numerous autonomous sub-governments controlled the socio-political life in the hinterland. Paul Dresch (2000) estimates that in the 1930s, the region of Hadramawt alone had about 2,000 separate governments. By adopting such a policy, the British have institutionalized and deepened the urban-rural/tribal division in the south to a far larger degree than in the Ottoman and Imam administrated north.

In a sharp contrast, in 1955, San’a, the capital of the self- isolated imamate was an underdeveloped small city of 50 000 people, almost all of them were Zaydi Yemenis. In a much quoted aside to a Syrian visitor, Imam Yahya is alleged to have said: “the colonization of India, China and other weak oriental countries came about because the governments of those countries gave foreigners concessions for the extraction of salt, petroleum and other resources. I would rather that my people and I remain poor and eat straw than let foreigners in, or give them concessions, no matter what advantages or wealth might result from their presence”(Douglas, 1987), something he lived by. Such an environment, according to Carapico, made Sana’a “ripe for a kind of bourgeois revolution”(Carapico, 1993) that would open the door to capitalist economy, and made Aden ripe for the emergence of anti-imperialist revolution that slams the door to exploitive imperial capitalism.

With this background in mind, let us now investigate the socio-economic and political factors that have shaped and continue to shape the process of state building in united Yemen. To do this, the following sections attempt to expose the foundations of the modern state in the pre and post revolutionary socio-political life in the two Yemeni entities that occupied the Southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. I proceed now to examine the construction of the first basic columns of modern state institutions in Yemen.

3. 4 The Foundations of the Modern State in Yemen: The Turks, the Imams and the British

The Turkish presence in Yemen has established the basic administrative and coercive foundations of the modern Yemeni state. The Ottoman foothold was first established in Yemen when Turkish troops commanded by Suleiman Pasha occupied Yemen's coastal plain of *Tuhama* in 1539. Incorporated initially as a separate *Sancak* (small province) of the Ottoman Empire, Yemen was later entrusted to a governor bearing the title of Pasha. The first Ottoman penetration of Yemen lasted for less than one century, from 1539-1636, and was marked by corruption, brutality, limited control, and violent resistance from the local population to the extent that the Ottomans named Yemen the cemetery of Anatolia. Because the coastal perimeter and seaports were the primary interest of the Ottomans, the Red Sea city of Ta'izz became the capital of the Ottomans in Yemen, while the hinterland and interior mountainous regions remained under the control of the Zaydi Imams, with Sa'dah as the capital. According to historians of Yemen, this coastal-interior split proved to be disastrous for the Ottoman control of Yemen as it created two rival central authorities (Blackburn, 1979; Smith, 2002). In the 19th century, the Turks returned to the coast of Yemen, first at the hand of the troops of Mohammed Ali Pasha of Egypt, and then in 1849 with troops directed

from Constantinople. Unlike their 16th century ill-fated presence, the second Turkish campaign made a serious commitment to the hinterlands and central highlands, and established its power base in Sana'a, as the new capital of the country. By the end of the 19th century, the Turks extended their power throughout the areas that are not under the rule of the British Government of India. Historians cite three reasons behind the shift in the Ottoman's commitment to the hinterland of Yemen: the control of the power base of the Zaydi Imams, the need for increasing agriculture tax revenues, and the importance of securing Yemen after the opening of the Suez Canal, in 1869. It was the weakening of the Zaydī Imamate, as a result of inherent conflicts in the Imamate structure as a tribal quasi-state that facilitated the Ottoman conquest of the Yemeni highlands in 1872. In addition to the political fragmentation of the 19th century Imamate, the inferior weaponry of the Zaydī tribes made it impossible for them to conduct successful or sustained resistance against the Ottoman troops. The Ottomans were able, therefore, to maintain control, already in the early years of the occupation, through the use of indirect rule, mainly divide-and-conquer tactics coupled with intermittent punitive expeditions.

The presence of the Ottomans, however, created the political conditions under which the Zaydi tribes would unite to defend themselves. In other words, the Ottoman occupation unified the isolated and deeply fragmented tribes because it has created the image of the non-Yemeni 'Other'. The Ottoman occupation allowed Imam Yahya to rebuild the image of the Imamate as a supra-tribal state deriving its authority from Zaydi/Islamic principles, and organized to unite the tribes in a long-term *Jihad* against foreign invaders.

In addition to police repression and counter-guerrilla tactics, the Ottomans sought increasingly to employ the techniques of the bureaucratic nation-state to consolidate their grip on Yemen. For example, they established local councils, called

maga'lis al-Eda'rah, and a Sana'a-based general council, *al-Maglis al-Omomi*, which was comprised of thirty appointed members. The latter body had its own annual budget and administrative cadre. In addition, the Ottoman administration created an administration of justice, which was based on the Office of Attorney General, and three types of courts: Islamic, appeal and commercial. The codes of the latter two courts were drawn entirely from French codes. One of the main purposes for injecting secular elements inside the juridical system was the undermining of the Zaydi doctrine, which was the base of the Imam's legitimacy. The Turkish administration also paid attention to building hospitals and schools. For instance, in 1901, two night schools for vocational studies, two teacher's institutes, and nine early and late primary schools were opened (Mandaville, 1984). Furthermore, and for the first time in the history of Yemen, a financial state system was introduced (Abazah, 1986). Finally, a sense of 'Ottomanism' was instilled in members of Yemen's learned elite.

These administrative bodies and the new norms which the Ottomans introduced were part of the attempts to incorporate Yemen as a part of the region into the larger post-Tanzimat project of imperial reform[13], and to win the hearts and minds of the local population. However, because of the decaying of Yemen's coffee trade[14] which had once generated the main source of revenues and poor agricultural production. North Yemen could not provide the Ottomans with a solid tax base conducive to supporting the expansion and strengthening of the institutional infrastructure associated with a modern state. The Ottomans had therefore to limit their state building related projects to the military sector and to the establishing of basic administrative units. The 1904 report of the Memduh Pasha Commission, which was sent from Constantinople to identify non-military alternatives in dealing with the Imam-led rebellion, illustrates how the Ottoman administration in Sana'a was confronted with finding a solution to the problem

of Yemen's weak tax base and the negative impact of such weakness on draining the treasury and hampering centralizing efforts.

According to the Commission Report, the absence of effective methods of agricultural production and poor road network for marketing products is two of the main causes of poverty in Yemen. In light of the findings, the Commission suggested that a team of agricultural experts should be hired for providing training and advice on methods of increasing agricultural production, and to start constructing a reliable transportation network of roads and railway tracks. The Commission Report highlighted that, " the agriculture of Sana'a and Hodaida, and the trade and commerce between the two points, would easily pay for the capital investment and make profit for the state…this matter is key to the foundations for reform in Yemen; the faster it is carried out, the sooner its beneficial results can be seen" (Mandaville, 1984).

However, the frequent armed clashes between the Ottoman government and local leaders, and the growing military sophistication and mobilization of Zaydi tribesmen have pushed the Zaydi-Ottoman conflict towards a total war. The culmination of this process would come in the rebellion of 1905, which was characterized by a violent campaign of attrition and massive social destruction in Yemen (Wilhite, 2004). The spread of the war to the extent of incursions into territories occupied by the British had prompted the British Government of India to establish a joint Anglo-Ottoman Commission to delimit the borders.

In the last quarter of the year 1905, The British started a diplomatic process of constructing boundaries between the territories under their control and those under the control of the Ottomans. The process was characterized by serious disagreements not only between the British and the Ottoman negotiators but also within the British and Indian governments. Arguments among diplomats in London, Aden and Delhi centered

primarily on how to deal with the Ottomans, with London advocating a cautious, conciliatory policy while Aden and Delhi both supported exploiting Ottoman weakness and taking a strong anti-Turkish position (Gavin 1975). The Turks backed up their claims with military incursions into territory occupied by the British, arguing that the whole Peninsula formed part of the Sultan-Caliph's "historic possession". It was only after military skirmishes, a contentious cadastral survey, and a number of diplomatic negotiations among London, Istanbul, Aden and Delhi that an agreement was reached. Unlike the traditional Ottoman's cadastral surveys, which were conducted for recording ownership, value, quantity and quality of land for the purposes of taxation, the joint British-Ottoman survey was the first of its kind in Yemen that had the purpose of drawing political boundaries (Wedeen, 2008). In 1914, an Anglo-Ottoman convention ratified the boundaries of the two imperial powers, and secured the Aden port by preventing surrounding populations from being subjected to either the Ottomans or the local rulers of the North (Little 1968).

The fierce Imam-led rebellion, however, made the Ottomans realize the futility of a total war policy, and led them to seek a negotiated settlement with the Imam. Such a settlement finally came after the Young Turk era, and peace was made with the Imam on the basis of political and cultural autonomy for the Zaydis. Following the defeat of the Ottomans in the First World War, al-Mutawakkilite Yemeni Kingdom was established in northern Yemen, as an independent country with Imam Yahya Mohammed Al-Mansour Hamid Al-Din as its ruler. In 1923, the Imam's kingdom was recognized by the League of Nations. However, despite the independence, the demarcation of borders, and the international recognition, there was no notion of a Yemeni citizenry in the Imam's kingdom. Legal texts continued to specify affiliation in denominational categories of Zaydi or Sahfi membership, rather than in a legislated

code invoking Yemenis as a 'people'. Until the 1930s, official documents and writings of Yemeni intellectuals used the word '*ahl'* not '*sha'b'* to refer to the people of Yemen. Etymologically, the former term means family, kin, or adherents of a group, while the latter term means 'people' and has explicit national and/or racial connotations. Messick (1993) and Wedeen (2008) note that the use of the term *sha'b* instead of *ahl* reflects a growing awareness among Yemeni intellectuals of the rise of nationalist movements in Syria and Iraq.

Following the departure of the Ottomans, Imam Yaḥya made claims to a "Greater Yemen", which encompasses the North and South, excluding Aden. These claims, however, were articulated in theocratic not nationalist terms. It did not take long for the Imam to realize that wining over the British forces in the Protectorate is nothing but an impossible political dream. Furthermore, the Imam lacked popular support in the South, not only because the majority of the people in the South were *shafi'is* but also because the links and relationships of the people in southern regions were far stronger with Singapore, Indonesia and India than with Yahya's Imamate. The Imam had to abandon, therefore, his expansionist designs on parts of what was to become the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and shifted his focus on consolidating his power in the North. In 1934, he formalized an agreement with the British that established an administrative frontier, one that adhered to the 1905 border agreement. The treaty recognized the status quo while leaving the final status of the boundary to be negotiated at a later time. By identifying "legitimate power with territory and historical continuity" Imam Yahya played a significant role in the process of state formation in the modern Yemen (Dresch, 2000). Although his system was a political constellation, which exhibited a tendency towards both sectoral and territorial expansion, its theocratic nature helped to legitimize the central authority over a deeply fragmented tribal society.

Furthermore, by affirming the position of the Zaydi doctrine, Yahya affirmed the position of Yemen.

The following letter of the Imam to his emissary in Cairo in 1928 reflects the Imam's attempt to stress his authority even over non-Yemeni Muslims everywhere:

"Further it is recognized and well-known that the Mohammedans, in accordance with the provisions of God's book, are all brethren [sic], and therefore it is of importance to us here to be able to know everything about the welfare of our brethren the Mohammedans in distant countries and we therefore order you to carry out the exhortations above referred to, and in addition to appeal to them to contribute what is due from them to the descendants of the Prophet, prayers be upon him, as a duty and as a sign of their loyalty and devotion to us owing to our lineage—such an assistance to us from the Mohammedans has been ordained by God himself, who prescribed the "Zakat" from the income of all Moslems". (In Willis, p.51)

Analyzing official letters of both Imam Yahya and Ahmed reveal not only how the political language of the Imamate kingdom was couched in Islamic-Zaydi terms but also how the mode of governance in the imamate system was based on non-specified territoril domain. Another text that provides a window on the type of state-society relations in Yemen during the Imamate system is Imam Yahya and Ahmed-sponsored newspaper, *al-Iman,* or 'the faith'. In addition to publishing the Imam activities, new governmental appointments and projects, *al-Iman* paper listed the state's application of Islamic punishments on people who committed adultery, murder, and theft or consumed alcohol. According to Willis (2004) and Wedeen (2003), the chronicling of punishments that were carried by the Imam's executive bodies in different cities and towns in the Imam's isolated kingdom was a tool for projecting state authority, and a medium that created the image of state activities. In addition to oaths of loyalty from tribal sheikhs and town elders, the advertising of the enforcement of an Islamic moral order helped the Imam in projecting his moral and political authority outside Sana'a.

A glance at the state structure in Imam Yahya's kingdom reveals that the Imam relied heavily on the structure he inherited from the Ottomans. For example, he took cues from the Turkish shift from reliance on occasional armed forces, quartered in residences as they moved or living in their own homes, to a standing professional army housed in specific, dedicated facilities (Messick 1993). He also adopted the Ottoman system of document registration with the effect of creating a state archiving system for legal documents such as wills and land deeds (Messick 1998).

The Turkish flavour in the Imamate system was so evident that foreign visitors to the Imam were required to wear Ottoman *kalpaks*, or lamb's-wool caps as court dress (Dresch, 2000). Clearly, the Imamates of Yahya and his son Ahmad sought to combine the development of a modern state apparatus inspired by the Ottoman style of management with traditional forms of legitimation. For example, the Imam used to receive *shakwa,* complaint, from the people as he walked through the streets of the city, and there was an official machinery with offices of *mazalim* (grievances), which processed petitions and selected the serious complaints to pass on to the appropriate notables (Zubaida, 2005). All the governors appointed by the Imam were required to have a daily long walk through the main market and collect petitions. Mesick (1993), for instance, reports that one of the governors during Imam Yahya's rule placed "a barrel with a slot for hand-submitted complaints to be posted" to the Imam. Another reporting on the state of law and order in Imam Yahya's system is provided by Douglas (1987), who documented the observations of some visitors to Yemen regarding the punishment that was meted out to government officials or others, who committed misdemeanors, not deserving *Shari' a* punishment. The punishment took the form of fastening leg irons and chains, and the guilty officials were left like this for as many hours or days as the offense warranted (Douglas, 1987).

In addition to the offices of governors, the structure of the Imam's bureaucracy, was made of the following basic administrative bodies: 1) *al-Diwan al Malaki* (royal cabinet) which acted as the secretariat of the Imam, it also included the foreign affairs office; 2) *al-Qalam* (the Pen), this was the largest administrative unit of the state and was responsible for managing military and security affairs; 3) *al-Mouhasabah* (Accounting), for organizing the financial affairs of the state, and 4) *al-Ma'aref* (Knowledge) for administrating the education system, mostly religious schools. The Imam's theocratic and authoritarian tendencies made him reject, however, the inherited Ottoman judicial structure, secular education and political representation system. One of the most valuable Turkish innovations that the Imam inherited was the telegraph system, which linked Sana'a with Ta'izz.

To support and coordinate their military actions in Yemen, the Turks extended telegraph lines from Luhayya up through Hujur, Hajja and Amran to Sana'a, and north from Luhayya along the coast to Asir. This inherited telegraph system provided the Imam with much political power by allowing him to be informed in minutes about developments in his isolated kingdom, at a time when it took people eight days on donkeys and camels to travel from Sana'a to Ta'izz (Dresch, 2000). Yet even with these ideas borrowed from Ottoman innovations, the imam's ability to control the Northern territories remained subjected to the renewal of oaths of allegiance among self-identified tribal groups in the northern highlands. For example, many of the areas that were evacuated by the Ottoman forces did not always submit their will to the Imam's centralized rule, and groups in all regions could both 'leave obedience' and also 'reenter it', as dictated by local advantage (Willis 2004). The above-mentioned administrative bodies of Yahya's kingdom mirror the limited objectives of the state, which focused mainly on security. The kingdom remained a poor state that was facing opposition from

modernists, who sought to duplicate economic and political developments that were taking place in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, and traditionalists disapproving of the Imams strong centralizing tendencies. In running the state affairs, the Imam relied on two main social groups, the *Sayyids* and *Qadis*.

(1) *Sayyid*s (the Religious Aristocracy)

Sadah or Sayyids (singular sayyid), is a group of notables who are believed to be descended from the Prophet Mohamed through his daughter Fatima and son-in-law, Ali, and his grandsons Husayn and Hasan. In the Muslim world today, there are an estimated 10 million such people. Their number and social status vary from country to country, but wherever they are found, they are associated with a sense of authority. Their august lineage give them utmost respect, whether it is in the revolutionary elite of Iran, the leadership of Hezbollah in Lebanon, in Afghanistan of the Mujahedeen or among the Shiite and Sunni communities in Pakistan, to be a Sayyad is to be an honored someone.

In Yemen, however, the Sayyids acquired a special significance. For more than a millennium, rulers of Yemen were recruited from within their ranks. Historians of the region trace the Sayyids of Yemen to the 9th century Zaydi state in Sa'da, established by Ibn-Huseyn Bin al-Qasim, who arrived in Yemen from Medina, and was declared Imam with the title al-Hadi (the rightly guided). It is believed that northern tribes invited sayyids to arbitrate in tribal disputes, and allocated for them land known as *hijras* (protected sanctuaries). By the 14th Century, most of the northern, central and eastern tribes of Yemen were Zaydi. The Sayyids propagated the Zaydi[15] branch of Shi'a Islam, a branch that is distinguished by the following tenets: the imamate is selective not hereditary. The basis of the selection is based on fourteen conditions, the most important of which are: he should be

a descendent of Husayen and Hassan, warrior proved in battle, and learned in Islamic law and theology. Because the Zaydi Imam is a temporal and spiritual leader, selected by the community, and can be deposed and replaced by another Imam if he deviates, numerous armed conflicts between the Zaydi rulers and Imamate-ambitious Sayyids took place. In other words, the philosophy of Zaydi governance system contained the seeds of intra-Sayyids violent competition (Al Heemi, 2002). In addition to ruling, the Sayyids and their families[16] filled all the highest posts in the government. At a social level, the Sayyid families served as a religious reference in case of a dispute between the tribes and religious scholars. Although the northern region of Saada used to be the main centre of the Sayyids, they were also important further south, in Hadhramout, where a migrant from Iraq named Ahmad Isa established their presence in AD 952. The Sayyids were, however, scarcely a class in the modern sense (Dresch, 2000). This is because some of them were poor, but were able, despite their poverty, to claim social status with wealthy and powerful sheikhs by the virtue of being the descendants of the Prophet. Following the toppling of the Imamate system, all members of the Hamid al-Din family, from whose ranks Imam Yahya and Ahmed came, were banned from living in Yemen. Many Sayyids were killed during the civil war, and their properties were confiscated. Few Sayyid families continue, however, to play a political role in Yemen. For example, al-Mutawakkil, Al-Mu'ayyad and Al Jafri families were recruited in the YAR and ROY to fill ministerial and diplomatic posts. During the civil war, these families sided with the republican forces. It is worth mentioning that the Sayyid families in colonized south of Yemen, particularly in Hadramawt, have played a regional role, which was assigned to them by the British in areas that lack powerful tribal leaders. The southern Sayyids were well represented in the Hadramawati Diaspora in South-East Asia. For example, one of the members of a Hadramawati Sayyid family in Indonesia, the Attas family, served as Indonesia's foreign minister. Interestingly,

in the post-colonial south Yemen, the Sayyid family of al-Attas provided a leading figure in the Socialist regime, Hayder Abu Bakar al-Attas, who was elected as a member of the Politburo of the YSP, the President of the PDRY, and later served as the first Prime Minister of the ROY (Peterson, 2008; Freitag, 2003).

2) The *Qadis* (The Bureaucratic Elite)

The Qadis (judges) were a socially privileged educated group of non-Sayyid origin, they filled government posts that were not occupied by the Sayyids, and acted as the right hand of the Sayyids in managing the state affairs. Thus, they were close to the core elite of the Imamate system. According to Dresch (1989), although in theory any Yemeni at the time of the Imam can become a *qadi* by the study of Islamic law; in practice, however, the privileged status was hereditary. Most of the Qadis were drawn from urban families, who have no particular tribal allegiance, and most of them were Zaydis, but few Shafi Qadis were appointed as well. In public, the Qadis were distinguished by wearing a distinctive sheath in a belt and carried their daggers obliquely to the right. In some cases, the status of qadi was an honorary title given by the Imam, regardless of nationality. For example, in the 1930s, one of the Turkish officials, Muhammad Raghib, who remained in Yemen after the withdrawal of the Ottoman forces, was given the title, and eventually became Imam's Yahya's Foreign Minster (Douglas, 1987). In the 1950s, it was estimated that there were one hundred and eight qadi houses. A large number of this group led the resistance against the Imamate system, mainly because of the Imams adoption of isolationism policy, and the father to son succession by Imam Yahya. After the September revolution, members of Qadis families continued to fill ministerial and high civil service posts and even the presidential office, e.g. Abdel Rahman Irayni (1967-1974). Four prominent old Qadi families continue to provide the post unified Yemeni state with technocrats for filling senior

governmental positions; these are Al Iryani, Al Arshi, Al Amry, and Al Ansi[17]. For example, Abd al-Karim al-Iryani, served as Prime Minister, from 29th of April 1998 to 31st of March 2001. Currently he serves as the political advisor of President Salih. In the ROY, members of the Al-Iryani family hold a number of ministerial and Ambassador-level jobs. Prominent members of Al-Arshi family in post revolutionary Yemen, on the other hand, include Abdul Karim Abdullah Al Arshi, who served as the acting President following the assassination of Colonel Al Ghashmi. In the ROY, Al Arshi members fill a number of posts as deputy ministers, diplomats, and general directors of state agencies.

To conclude, in pre revolutionary north Yemen, the Ottoman-inspired bureaucratic measures, which the Imam applied for the purpose of consolidating his power and enforcing law and order in a deeply fragmented tribal society, demonstrate what Elias (1982) calls the pacification of populations through the introduction of new norms, codes of conduct, constraints and prohibitions that worked to co-opt elites and 'civilize' the population. Although the administrative measures taken by the Imam were limited, they were, however, basic tools of regulating his subjects. Through the application of these measures, the Imam has succeeded in imposing a degree of 'discipline'. The Imam's constant preparation for war, on the other hand, had been one of the most important Imamate's state-building activities. As will be discussed in Chapter Six in this present study, the Imam paid much attention to forming standing and non standing armies, which in turn provided the main incentive for the extraction of resources from the population. The Imamate of Yemen followed, therefore, five steps in the causal chain of Tilly (1975), which runs from the 1) expansion of armies, to 2) new efforts to extract resources from the subject population, to 3) the development of new bureaucracies and administrative innovations, to 4) resistance from the population, to 5) renewed coercion. Finally, the agreements, which

the Imam signed with external entities, have demarcated the external- internal realms in Yemen.

In Aden, by contrast, the British constructed an elaborate modern state structure. At first, the British policy in the South was based on the vision of the first British political agent in Aden, Captain Haines, from 1839 to 1845, who kept Aden as a fortress isolated from the rest of the Protectorate. From the end of the First World War, following the defeat of the Ottomans and their departure from North Yemen, Britain looked at Aden not as a fortress but as a coaling and major communication station. This change in Britain's attitude resulted in creating a federal rule consisting of an amalgam of autocratic commands through a modern administrative structure and political manipulation of traditionally determined social mechanisms (Gavin, 1975). Under the British colonial administration, Aden had a well-organized port authority, police units, immigration office, courts, Legislative Council, water and sewage system, transport system, communication system, cultural clubs and labor unions. In the first five decades of the 20th century, colonial Aden was the most advanced city in the Arabian Peninsula. In addition to a theater, cinema halls[18] and printing and publication houses, Aden had forty schools, out of which thirty-one were for basic education and nine for secondary education, and a university college for girls' education (Seliman, 1994). As a result, unlike in the rest of Yemen, a substantial middle class has emerged in colonial Aden. The colonial policy in the hinterland of the South, on the other hand, was based on the objective of protecting the modern city from disorder. To achieve this objective, British administrators applied what they called 'nonintervention' and 'indirect rule' over the tribesmen and peasants of the hinterland, trusting political and administrative authority to local sultans and sheikhs. Worth noting that unlike in the northern parts, tribes in the south failed in creating strong and united confederations, and have often lacked political influence beyond their territories. Southern tribes were

fragmented and divided into a large number of Sultanates each of which was ruled by a Sultan or an Emir (Manea, 1996).

In summary, in pre-revolutionary North and South Yemen, very different state building strategies emerged in response to the perceived problems of disorder in the nineteenth century. In the colonially administrated South, the main obstacle in building and maintaining a modern state was diagnosed as tribally created disorder. In the North, however, disorder tended to be portrayed by the Imams not as a battle between state authority and tribes but as a struggle over moral propriety (Willis 2004). The key point here is that the evolution, organization and administration of the Yemeni state in the North and South have always been markedly different from one another.

3. 5 State Building in the Republics of Arabia: The Egyptian-Saudi and Russian Factors

Unlike post-colonial Arab states that come with a governmental apparatus, the republic of Yemen had to construct much of its state structure. Building such a structure, however, is never implemented in a void. Rather, it's a process that is carried out on the basis of the existing old socio-economic, cultural and political experiences, and it is very much influenced by the new political environment under which the process is initiated. In other words, state building is an accumulating process. The following sub sections explore the post Northern and Southern revolutions political environment under which state institutions were built.

3.5.1 The YAR: The Tribal, Islamic and Regional Discourses in the PPM

On the 26th of September 1962, a group of North Yemeni officers led by Colonel Abdullah Sallal mounted a revolutionary coup against the last Zaydi Imam, Mohamed

al-Badr[19]. Angered by the imam's oppressive rule and the extreme isolationism of Yemen, and mobilized by Nasser's revolutionary call for overthrowing conservative Arab monarchies, the successful coup plotters announced the birth of the first republic in Arabia - the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR), with Sallal as its president. Yemen's September revolution should be seen, therefore, as a part of the climate of Arab nationalism. The revolution had, however, a particular Yemeni character, namely the twin goals of overthrowing the theocratic Imamate system within and achieving unity with the South of Yemen, without (Hinnebusch & Ehteshami, 2002). But because of its republican nature, the birth of the YAR was not welcomed in Yemen's vast neighborhood of conservative monarchs. Within Yemen, the backers of the revolution were merchants, urban dwellers, intellectuals influenced by Nasserism, and most Shafi'I Sunnis. The opponents were the Royalists-Zaydi tribesmen and the Imam's extended family and clients. Outside Yemen, the main backer was Nasser and the main opponent was the Saudi royal family. The royalists also received assistance from the United Kingdom, Jordan and Iran. It did not take long for the backers and opponents to go into a lengthy bloody civil war that lasted for almost 8 years[20]. During this war, North Yemen has turned into a battlefield not only between Republicans and Royalists, but also between forces of Arab nationalism led by Nasser and forces of monarchial conservatism led by king Feisel of Saudi Arabia. The war ended in 1970 by a Saudi sponsored agreement between the republicans and royalists. Although, the former were victorious, the latter along with tribal sheikhs were granted a share of governing the new republics. This meant that the former Imamate triangle of power has been replaced by a new one made of Republicans, Royalists and Tribal Sheikhs.

Eight outcomes of this war are significant to this research. First, as a result of the large sums of money and military supplies that tribes have received from the Saudis,

they have emerged as a powerful socio-political force that posed a serious challenge to the new state's monopoly of coercion. In military terms, the balance of power between the newly born state and the tribes was tipped back toward the latter. This is because Egyptian forces fought on behalf of the YAR forces and had almost exclusive use of the Soviet weaponry made available for the defense of the YAR (Burrows, 1991). Tribesmen, however, had direct access to their Saudi supplied weapons, and gained an extraordinary experience in insurgent warfare techniques[21]. It's worth noting that during this war some Yemeni tribes supported the republicans against the royalists, while others switched sides, mainly, for economic gains. This switching is considered to be one of the factors behind the prolonging of the war. Shifting loyalties also made it difficult for the Egyptians to determine who was supporting and opposing the republicans (Witty, 2001). At the end of the war, tribes stored and maintained their access to their arsenal of Western and Eastern made weapons. In economic and political terms, on the other hand, the direct pumping of Saudi and Egyptian money to the Yemeni tribal sheikhs undermined the authority of the newly born weak Yemeni state, and strengthened the tribal structure in such a way that a number of tribes have emerged as an "economically independent social force" (Manea, 1998). Also, the Saudi orchestrated reconciliation that ended the war provided the tribe with a strong political position in shaping the PPM in North Yemen. For example, a number of leading tribal figures were granted high posts at state level. As a result, the tribe influenced the state decisions instead of the other way round. State building in North Yemen was characterized from the outset, therefore, by its tribal discourse. One of the prices that the state in YAR had to pay, as a part of the reconciliation, was the expelling of modernist leftists who advocated strengthening the state vs. the tribe.

Second, the heavy Egyptian military intervention[22] was accompanied by Egyptian attempts at constructing a political, economic and administrative body for the weak and torn YAR. For Nasser, the YAR represented an opportunity for reasserting his waning[23] influence in the Arab world, spreading his ideology to the monarchies of the Peninsula, and expelling the British from their last regional stronghold in Aden (Witty, 2001). In addition to these reasons, Nasser, according to Kamrava (2005), was interested in interfering in Yemen because of the new revolutionary military leadership that was willing to follow his lead, and because of the chance "to create a state structure from scratch based on Nasserist model". To these political motives, one may include geo strategic reasons, namely the Egyptian dominance of the Red Sea from Suez Canal to Bab-al- Mandab Strait.

Nasser was determined, therefore, to strengthen the YAR by all means. To achieve this, in addition to the military protection, Egyptian advisors carried out the task of erecting ministries and state agencies that should implement the YAR decisions and commands. Such ministries and agencies "were pale copies of their Cairo originals" (Burrowes, 1991), and some of them were white elephants. For example, a ministry of aviation was established at a time when Yemen had one passenger airplane and three pilots only (Al-Mutawakel, 2000). Furthermore, most of Yemen's state agencies were staffed and managed by Egyptian bureaucrats who introduced a highly centralized and hydraulic Egyptian structure into the highly decentralized and fragmented tribal YAR. The Egyptian staff performed the administrative tasks of the YAR with a focus not on the actual needs of the YAR but rather on their "need to extricate themselves from what they came to call 'our Vietnam" (Burrowes, 1991). Despite the fatal mistakes of the Egyptian bureaucracy in Yemen, the Egyptian support to the new and sole republic in Arabia has altered the total political and administrative look of the Yemeni state. It was

Egypt of Nasser that introduced to the North Yemeni state the concept of government involvement in all areas other than security, religiously-based taxation and justice. The Egyptian administration extended the scope of public education and constructed the foundations for specialized state agencies entrusted with the task of planning and implementing the will of the state.

Third, during the war, the republicans had a centrally organized political-military structure that had a firm control over Yemen's triangle of urban concentrations, which included Sana'a, Taizz and Hodidah. The control of the royalists, on the other hand, over the north, northeast, northwest and a big part of the eastern regions of Yemen, was not direct in nature. Instead, it was through alliances with leaders of autonomous tribes in these areas. Furthermore, while it is true that the republican central government could not control 50% of the territory of the state during night-time hours, it was, however, capable of controlling and managing the access to schools, roads, clinics and the new pipe water system. Royalists and their allies in tribal areas could not compete with the republican central authority in the provision of modern urban services. In my view, the failure of royalists to compete with the republicans in providing and managing modern urban infrastructure was a victory for the idea of a modern centralized authority in Yemen.

Fourth, following the departure of Egyptian forces in 1967 and the drying out of the Egyptian funding, Riyadh became the main source for the survival of the YAR. This rapid change of external source of survival illustrates that already in her first few years the first republic in Arabia was infected with Arabian rentierism. The YAR dependence on Saudi Arabia and Arab Gulf sheikhdoms reached its peak in the 1970s when Saudi Arabia was even paying the monthly salaries of its government functionaries and army personnel. By making the YAR economically dependent on fat Saudi grants and on the

remittances of Yemeni labor migrants[24] in Saudi Arabia, the Saudis had managed to change the original republican revolutionary features of the YAR and made it a center-right Saudi satellite state. The Saudi funding for education, for example, focused on establishing Islamic schools and universities that promote the Wahabist version of Islam. By so doing, the Saudis intended to promote Islamism as the antidote against the biggest nightmare of ruling monarchs - Socialism. In addition, the Saudis were carrying out side payments to the major Yemeni tribes in order to strengthen their position and prevent the Yemeni state from growing strong enough to pose a threat to Saudi Arabia. The weak state in the YAR was caught, therefore, from its early years into the political and economic net of the influential pro U.S. Gulf monarchies, and had to compete with strong and externally supported Islamic and tribal forces within its borders. In addition, the Saudi-sponsored reconciliation that brought an end to the war made the first republic in Arabia a conservative one.

Fifth, the long bloody experience of the civil war resulted in delaying the project of state building in the YAR. This is because security and order consumed most of the political attention and the limited economic sources of the YAR. The result of such a delay was "the failure to create an effective capacity to monitor, influence and control the rate and direction of socio-economic changes" (Saif, 2000). The years of the civil war have, indeed, diverted the modernists and reforms from the essential task of state building (Burrowes & Kasper, 2007).

Sixth, the heavy external intervention in shaping the political and economic destiny of the weak YAR has stimulated the search for a political leadership that is able to foster the development of a sovereign modern state capable of projecting its authority. President Ibrahim al-Hamdi (ruled from 1974-77) personified such a search. He was the first North Yemeni leader who attempted to build a modern state that is

separate from the tribe. Unlike his exiled predecessor, President al-Iryani[25], who focused on economic needs, al- Hamdi focused, instead, on breaking tribal power by reincorporating the Left and creating "a more broadly based centre-Left coalition" (Burrowes, 1991). Among al-Hamdi efforts were the creation of the LDA (local development association) and the Correction Movement. The latter reflected his plan of training and placing political cadres at all state's levels (Carapico, 1984). The LDA, on the other hand, was a political initiative aimed at weakening the base of tribal sheikhs by promoting nationwide grass roots groups and organizations. Al-Hamdi, as will be discussed later, also had his eyes on unifying Yemen as a means of strengthening Yemen vs. the Saudi intervention. For his efforts of political modernization, al-Hamdi paid with his life. His successor, al-Ghashmi, received the same fate after only being in office for 8 months. Since 1987, however, one man remains as the leader of Yemen - Ali Abduallah Salih. The reasons behind his long presidency are addressed in Chapter Six in this present research.

Seventh, in a number of ways, the resolution of Yemen's civil war presents interesting alternatives to other civil conflicts. For example, the Saudi-Egyptian-Sponsored compromise clearly integrated the two rivals - the royalists and republicans, into the new political system. With the exception of members of the Imam's family, almost all influential members of the royalist entourage were given senior posts in government and the military, and even inside the Republican Council, the highest executive organ of the new republic. Another distinctive feature of the Compromise is the intentional neglect of addressing the thorny issue of disarmament. As a result, the only difference between pre and post-compromise periods was the quality of weapon being carried (Licklider, 1995). Today, thirty-nine years after the royalist-republican Compromise, Yemen remains suspected of having the highest per capita holdings of

small arms in the world, the majority of which are fully automatic assault rifles. Estimates of the number of small arms in Yemen are difficult to make, as the Yemeni government is not forthcoming with such data. However, international organizations and researchers estimate that in Yemen, with its twenty one million persons, the number of small arms vary from the often repeated, but exaggerated, figure of fifty million to the more conservative estimate of five to nine million (Miller, 2003). This proliferation of arms among tribesmen continues to create an ambiguity over who, in north Yemen, has the 'right' to use violence, and exercise control over territory - the state or local tribes? Chapter Four in this present study attempts to find an answer to this question. It does this by exploring the mechanisms and dynamics of negotiating the boundaries between the authority of the state and the power of tribes in Yemen.

Finally, the severe instability and bloodshed, which the civil war produced in the immediate aftermath of the revolution, activated the search for a viable political formula around which to build a consensus between traditional and modern forces.

3.5.2 The PDRY: An Outpost of Socialism-Based Arab PPM

"The people of Aden, after traversing a long period of struggle, have won independence. But they will have to exert considerable efforts to defend and strengthen the independence they have won. Success to you, heroic people of Aden".
(Pravda Newspaper[26])

Four years after a group of military officers in Sana'a deposed the Imam of North Yemen, revolutionaries with a labor militancy base in Aden and a rural base in the poor countryside succeeded in chasing out the imperial British forces from their last colony[27] in the Arab world, and announced the birth of one more republic in Arabia - the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). For these revolutionaries, the driving out of the UK was the way for removing the local exploitive ruling class. The

latter was made up of colonial state apparatus and commercial bourgeoisie in Aden, and Sultans and tribal leaders who owned almost all the fertile lands on the rural side. From the 1st day of her inception on November 1967 until her total disappearance in July 1994, the PDRY represented a radical socialist model of modernization and development of a poor Arab country that was continuously struggling to survive in a hostile monarchial peninsula and a harassing international geopolitical climate. With the YSP [28](Yemen Socialist Party) as its political backbone, the PDRY followed the path of radical socialist transition. Such a path made it stand in a clear contrast to all other Arab states, including those who professed adherence to socialism. An old Yemen-watcher shed light on this contrast and noted the following five distinguishing features of the PDRY: First, it was the only Arab state that "has gone beyond nationalist revolution and social reforms to a socialist revolution" (Hallidy, 1979). Second, it has gone much further than any other Arab state, "in socializing the means of production". Third, it has rejected the theories of Arab/Islamic socialism that were espoused by Nasser, Qaddafi, the Baath in Syria and Iraq, and the NLF in Algeria. In other words, it was the only Arab state that adopted an internationalistic perspective of socialism. Fourth, unlike all Arab republics, the state's top positions were not filled by figures drawn from the military establishment, and the state apparatus was controlled by the YSP. The latter constituted an independent force. Fifth, in contrast to the "equivocation of the other supposedly 'socialist' Arab countries", the PDRY has shown a firm rejection, which even took a militant form, to reactionary forces in the Arab world. In support of these Hallidayian observations, one can add that the PDRY sailed so far away from the rest of the Arab world to the extent of being the only Arab state to support the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Naturally, with such radical features, the degree of the PDRY exposure to regional and U.S. threats was so strong and even "rare in the history of third world

revolutions" (Halliday, 1979). Surrounded by enemies and constrained by its material shortages, the PDRY had to fall back on the USSR for survival. The anchoring of the PDRY to the orbit of the USSR went, however, beyond military and economic aid. The YSP pushed the new republic towards the duplication of the USSR's Marxist-Leninist model as the base of state ideology and social life. Pictures of Marx and Lenin were in all governmental buildings, a red star was added to the country's flag, and Lenin's birthday was celebrated in the national media. Marxist symbols were so pervasive even in the names of schools, e.g. The Proletariat School (Cigar, 1990). As far as the impact of such Marxist ideology on the political discourse in general and on the PPM in particular, one can identify the following. First, unlike the YAR, tribalism and Islam were totally marginalized in the political discourse. The role of Islam was already absent during the struggle against British imperialism in Aden, and the post revolution regime perceived religion as a barrier to the new republic's stated goals of transforming the traditional Yemeni society into a socialist and rationalist one, and creating a 'New Yemeni Man'.

Generally speaking, in dealing with the role of Islam in the Yemeni society, the regime in the PDRY applied two main strategies. The first strategy, which was adopted in the early post-colonial years, was violent in nature. For example, in Hadramawt region[29], where clerics and Sayyids occupied a big space in the pre-republican socio-political hierarchical structure, the National Liberation Front (NLF) launched a violent campaign against the religious establishment. The two most famous slogans during the campaign was: 'No more clerics' and 'O clerics, call upon your Lord and the Quran to come and defend you!'. According to Cigar (1990), the campaign included public humiliation and even the killing of a large number of religious figures. Other tough but less violent measures included the abolishing of *awqaf* (religious endowment), denying

young females with Islamic dress entry to high schools and universities and the ignoring of Islam in the national media.

In a later stage in the history of the PDRY, however, the regime applied its second strategy, which was based upon avoiding the use of violent measures and being publicly anti-Islam and putting much emphasis, instead, on propagating Islam as a 'liberation theology' that shares much in common with Socialism, e.g. opposition to exploitation, hoarding of wealth and injustice. Efforts were made, also, to highlight the threat of Imperialism to Islam, and to teach Islamic history as a history of socio-economic class struggle.

Tribalism, on the other hand, received a similar treatment in South Yemen. The PDRY made lots of efforts to abolish the influence of tribe in political and social life. Among these efforts are the confiscation of lands owned by tribal sheikhs, banning the carrying of weapons and the consumption of Qat (allowed only at weekends), and a media campaign labelling tribalism with *takhalwf* (backwardness). As a result, many influential tribal leaders fled the country and took refuge in Saudi Arabia and Oman. Efforts were also made to create a Yemeni national identity based on citizenship rather than tribal affiliations - conscription, roads linking tribal areas with urban centres, a unified economy and promoting a national culture in the form of literature, archaeology, music…etc. Second, the position of woman has been radically transformed (Molyneux & Others, 1979). Following the core socialist values that stress the concept of emancipation, the PDRY launched a program of emancipation for women that involved: 1) the right to vote. 2) the participation of woman in the national work force (by the mid-1970s, out of the estimated 14,000 workers in industrial projects, over 2000 were women), 3) the prohibition of polygamy, child marriage, and arranged marriage, 4) the establishing of a legal code for gender equality, e.g. divorce (Halliday, 1979). Such

measures were and still are unprecedented in the Arabian Peninsula. Third, bureaucracy and military establishments have been modernized. Prior to independence, the army in South Yemen was made of tribesmen recruited by the British to enforce law in the countryside. The revolution has changed a tribal force into a Soviet/ Eastern European equipped and trained regular army of 21,000 troops. In addition, a PMF (People's Militia Force) was developed. Compulsory conscription played a vital role in creating a national identity and diluting tribal and regional identities.

The bureaucracy, on the other hand, has been transformed from being a service adjunct to the British naval base into a long stretching arm of the state. According to Halliday, from 1967 to 1977, the number of civil servants in the PDRY was more than doubled, and the bureaucracy became one of the main channels of communication between the regime and society. In all ministries and state agencies, the main slogan was: "To defend the Yemeni Revolution, to fulfil the Five-Year Plan, to build the Vanguard Party". The effectiveness of state security and bureaucracy was reflected during the Supreme People Council's elections, where voting was nationwide. In contrast, election activities during the British colonization of Yemen, took place only in Aden due to the weakness of central government. Fourth, state control of economy and the imposition of a centralized planning system were put forward. Observers of the PDRY note the economic advances made in PDRY despite the impoverishment of the country, and the impact of such advances on state-society relations- e.g., total stamping out of corruption in every economic enterprise, all banking was controlled by the single National Bank of Yemen, state retail shops at a national level had been established, state owned factories (fish canning, textile…etc), greater income equality[30], the spread of cooperatives[31], and the enforcement of a national price system for all basic foodstuffs. The latter is a remarkable measure in a country with a long tradition of enormous

regional variations in price. Clearly, such economic and political measures taken by the PDRY illustrate that the state in the PDRY was far more successful than the one in the YAR in terms of penetrating the Yemeni society and enforcing state decisions and command. Unlike the tribal state in the north, the centralized socialist state in south Yemen was the addressee for people's moral and material grievances. In short, state building in the PDRY was more advanced than in the YAR.

3. 6 Unified Yemen: Between Democratic Transition and Imperfect Dictatorship

The fusion of the YAR and the PDRY was not a move toward constituting Eriksen's (1993) cultural community. Instead, it was a pragmatic step taken by the regimes of the two countries on the basis of economic and political calculations. For the regime in the more populous North, the biggest political advantage in implementing the unity was the strengthening of both Yemen's geopolitical position in the Peninsula, and the regime's position against its unstable tribal countryside. The economic motives of the YAR, on the other hand, included the tapping of a badly needed national income from the oil discoveries along its frontiers with the PDRY[32]. For the Northern regime, such an income would cushion the reduction in Western and Gulf aid - as a result of reduced Western/Gulf "interests in sustaining inter-Yemeni tensions" (Carapico, 1993). For the PDRY, on the other hand, the unification offered a rescue boat from the crisis of legitimacy that the regime was facing following the violent power struggle within the ruling party, and the economic hardships that were generated as a result of the post Cold War termination of the essential Soviet assistance. Halliday (1990), however, notes that already before the end of the Cold War, the PDRY model of governance was facing serious problems due to" the very location of South Yemen, in an Arabian Peninsula, the majority of whose states were enjoying a consumer boom derived from oil revenues,

made isolation and austerity all the more difficult to sustain"(Halliday, 1990). The conditions mentioned above led to the birth of the ROY and explain the unprecedented Arab style of power sharing and democracy that characterized unified Yemen in its early years. In other words, both regimes agreed to practice democracy and share power not out of their strong democratic beliefs and mutual trust, but rather in order to survive and maintain their power (Carapico, 1993). It's tempting for me to argue, therefore, that unified Yemen, the least developed and most tribal Arab state, represents the most pragmatic story of state formation in the Arab Middle East. Perhaps a glance at the basic economic, financial, demographic and social indicators is useful in providing the picture of the two Yemeni states at the time of their unification, and the incentives that the two regimes saw in their economic amalgamation:

Table 2: Basic Indicators for the YAR and PDRY (1989)

	YAR	**PDRY**
Size of Country in 000 ㎢	195	333
Population (mn, mid-1989)	10.1	2.5
GDP ($mn in 1988)	5,631	1,275
Remittances ($mn)	264	173
External Debt ($bn)	3.3	2.5
Exchange Rate (=$)	9.76	0.345
Sources: World Bank, World Development Report, 1990; IMF, International Financial Statistics Yearbook, 1990.		

Table 3: GDP and Real Growth in YAR and PDRY

	1984	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1988**
YAR: GDP (mnYR)	24,756	30,969	38,389	43,559	54,959
Real Growth %	3.3	4.6	9.4	4.7	19.2

PDRY: GDP (mnYD**)**	350	510	400	430	440
Real Growth %	8.8	-6.6	-11.8	3.2	0.3
Sources: IMF, International Financial Statistics Yearbook, 1988; World Bank, World Tables, 1990-91.					

Table 4: Origin of GDP in YAR and PDRY (%) in 1988

Sector	**YAR**	**PDRY[1]**
Agriculture & fisheries	22.5	14.1
Mining & quarrying	9.5[2]	...
Manufacturing	12.7	9.5[3]
Electricity & water	0.9	...
Construction	2.7	11.8
Trade, hotels & restaurants	13.0	9.7
Transport & communications	10.8	11.0
Finance, insurance & real estate	7.8	1.0
Public & other services	13.0	29.6
Indirect taxes less subsidies	7.1	13.3
GDP at market price	100.0	100.0
Sources: CPO, Statistical Year Book, 1988; UNIDO, PDRY: Enhancing Industrial Productive Capacity, 1989. Note [1]: 1989 estimates, [2]: including oil production, [3]: including mining, quarrying, manufacturing, electricity & water.		

Table 5: Sources of Developing Financing (selected years)

South Yemen			**North Yemen**			**Source**
1988	1987	1986	1988	1987	1986	
0.97	0.96	0.96	0.67	0.63	0.61	Public
0.03	0.04	0.04	0.33	0.37	0.39	Private
Sources: CPO, 1988 Statistical Year Book: 384; UNIDO, PDRY: Enhancing Industrial Productive Capacity, 1989: 8						

Table 6: Balance of Payments ($mn)

	YAR		PDRY	
	1988	**1989**	**1988**	**1989**
Merchandise exports	447	606	82	113
Merchandise imports	1,309	1,282	596	553
Trade Balance (-)	862	676	513	440
Workers' remittances	314	264	255	173
Current Account (-)	694	579	404	416
Direct investment & long-term capital	449	493	257	334
Short-term capital	26	17	57	68
Errors & omissions	-58	57	62	-2
Changes in reserves (- = increase)	260	5	5	0
Source: IMF, Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook, 1990				

Table 7: Percentage of Industrial Production According to Ownership (1987-1989)

1989			1987			Sector
ROY	**South**	**North**	**ROY**	**South**	**North**	
65	72	64	31	70	25	Public
0	5	0	1	5	0	Cooperative
4	17	3	10	19	8	Mixed
31	6	33	58	6	67	Private
100	100	100	100	100	100	Total
Source: CPO, Statistical Report, 1991						

Table 8: Industrial Firms Organized by Ownership (1988)

Total	South	North	Sector
48	33	15	Public
9	8	1	Cooperative
13	11	2	Mixed
132	23	109	Private
202	75	127	Total
Source: CPO, Statistical Report, 1991			

The seven tables illustrate the economic differences and similarities between the YAR and PDRY at the time of their unification. To begin with the similarities, despite the ideological and political differences between the YAR and the PDRY, their economies shared the following features: First, both were poor countries situated, economically and geographically, on the periphery of oil rich monarchies. Their poverty[33], proximity to such monarchies and the preferential treatment in the Gulf job market made them outlets for exporting labour. For both regimes, labour remittances[34] constituted the main source of hard currency. Their reliance on labour export made them, however, vulnerable to the economic shocks of the rise and fall in oil prices. In addition, both suffered, as a result, from labour shortage and wage increase in domestic labour market. Halliday (1985) observes another side effect of the migration and influx of emigrants monies on North Yemen, namely, the provision of "new ways in which people can amass local power". Halliday explains this by noting that instead of modernization in the form of weakening tribal loyalties; the new money was used in purchasing guns and providing wealth to tribes. Second, the main employer in both countries was the agricultural sector, including fishing. Third, both had large current account deficits. In short, the command economy in the South and the free market,

laissez-faire regime in the North shared a number of similarities. Both depended heavily on aid, loans, labour and entrepreneurial remittances. The PDRY, however, assimilated remittance wealth to state expenditure more efficiently than did the North (Dresch 2000). Politically too, both North and South shared underlying similarities, one of the obvious similarities was the achieving of alternation in political power through the use of violence. According to Wedeen (2008), although, unlike in the YAR, the mechanisms of social control in the PDRY were directed towards building state institutions to provide public goods in return for some political order, the inner workings of the PDRY and YAR regimes tended, however, to be shielded from public view. Despite the frequent contrasting of the PDRY's law and order with the YAR's chaos and anarchy, the two regimes relied on the military and security forces trained abroad to monitor and control its citizens (Carapico 1998).

Areas of difference, however, can be noticed, mainly, in public ownership and consumption of imports. The latter was much higher in the YAR. This seems to be one of the reasons why North Yemen had far worse current account deficits than the PDRY. In the YAR, only 15 of the 127 industrial establishments were publicly owned. Such establishments employed a quarter of the skilled work force. In the PDRY, however, most of the industrial establishments were state-owned, and employed three quarters of the labour force. Another difference which is important to this research is that in the case of South Yemen, the nationalization of the inherited colonial enterprises, and the successful land reform[35] program have led to creating a far more modern state, in terms of mobilization, than the one found in the North (Carapico, 2006). Against these economic/political backgrounds, and the seismic global/regional shift, the two states were unified into the Republic of Yemen (ROY). Obviously, the two regimes were confronted with the core question that is always posed in any unified state - how to

create one ultimate power centre? Such a question is unavoidable because when two states unite “there has to be a mechanism for determining where ultimate power lies” and “for turning two centres of power into one”(Whitaker, 1995). In a carefully designed power sharing arrangement, the two regimes amalgamated rather than integrated into the ROY.

On March 2, 1990, the prime ministers of the two parts, Abdul-Aziz Abdul Ghani (north) and Yassin Saeed Noaman (south) met in Taiz and agreed to first integrate institutions and interests such as: official press agencies, radio and television stations, post, telephone and telecommunications corporations, General Authority for Meteorology and Aviation, General Tourism Corporation, customs Authority, Taxes Authority, General Authority for Ports and Marine Affairs, Central Bank, and Airways companies (Yemenia and Yamda). The details of the arrangement opened the gates of Yemen for the arrival of a caravan of democracy that had never before passed through the gates of any country in the Arabian Peninsula. With Ali Abdullah Salih, "the army man par excellence"(Dresch, 2000), who ruled North Yemen since 1978, as the president of the new Republic of Yemen (ROY), Ali Salim al-Bayad, the secretary general of the YSP of the PDRY as the vice president, and Al-Attas, chairman of the Supreme People’s assembly Presidium as the prime minister, the parliament (*Majlis al-Nuwwab*) of the ROY held its first session in Aden and approved the two regimes decision to have a thirty-month period of transition leading up to national elections. The parliament approved, also, the following measures: a five-member Presidential Council, thirty-nine member cabinet including all ministers of the two countries, a merging of the two former parliaments into a unified Chamber of Deputies, and the lifting of restrictions on movement between the YAR and PDRY. In addition, the framework of the arrangement detailed power sharing in such a way that the YAR and the PDRY have

an equal representation in the administrative and political structure of the ROY. The representation was, therefore, not based on the demographic balance between the two countries, which is in favour of the YAR. For example, control of ministries was distributed in an even manner between the two sides. In fact, as Carapico and Rome (1994) note, the government of the ROY was made of all ministers, civil servants and parliamentarians of both countries. All state-managed agencies such as postal services, news agencies and central banks were merged (Braun, 1992). The two countries retained, however, their armies - army units were regionally based and under the same pre-unity leadership (Stevenson & Alaug, 2000). The Defense Minster, however, was from the PDRY and the Chief of Armed Staff was from the YAR. This special dealing with the army seems to be an assurance measure for each side and reflects how power sharing in the ROY took place in a very delicate and tense balance. The manner of sharing between the two disassembled ruling parties was, according to Carapico (1993), unlike any other 'democratizing' system. The North-South sharing went even further, to the extent of basing the capital of the ROY in Sana'a for six months and for the other six in Aden. The Gulf War soon overshadowed the euphoria of unity. The latter, as a result of Yemen's support of Iraq, gave a crushing economic blow to the infant ROY. The expulsion of more than 800,000 Yemeni migrants and the cutting of western and Gulf aid have seriously compounded the struggle of the new republic. This sudden acute loss of rental means has, however, accelerated the unity and electoral democracy.

In May 1991, the people of Yemen in a nation-wide referendum approved the new constitution of the ROY. At the end of the same year, the presidential Council introduced a multiparty system. By the time of the first national elections in July 27, 1993, dozens of political parties emerged; at one time there were more than 40 parties. In the ROY, the party of the political elite was the General Popular Congress (GPC),

and in the PDRY the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP). The pre-elections period was, indeed, an exhibition of organized mass politics in a Peninsula that deals with politics as affairs of the ruling families. Many partisan and independent newspapers and magazines covered, without restrictions, the activities and agendas of the elections. In addition, a multitude of civil society organizations became politically and socially involved. Carapico (1993) observes how the democratic climate of political discussions in such a period was noticeable even in qat sessions. However, the civil war of May 1994 brought an end to the honeymoon between the regimes of YAR and PDRY. On the first days of this war, which is commonly known as the 'war of succession', three scenarios were expected. First, the military victory of the northerners would constitute a political catastrophe for the Saudis. On the basis of the Saudi political calculation, the victory of Salih's regime meant a unified large Yemeni army and a bigger nation, which in turn would strengthen Yemen's position in the Saudi-Yemeni dispute over Najran and Gizan provinces. During the war, the coverage of the Saudi media illustrated the Saudi concerns. The Saudi media accused North Yemen of recruiting 'Iraqis', thus drawing a connecting line between the assumed pro-Iraq position of Salih during the 'Desert Storm' operation and Saddam's support to North Yemen. The second scenario was the re-division of Yemen into two entities. For the Saudis, this scenario was in their best and widest interest, since a re-divided Yemen meant weak Salih and two armies who will be more interested in fighting each other than posing threats to the Saudi interests. The third scenario was a nightmare for the Saudis and neighbouring oil monarchies: the 'Somalization' or 'Lebanization' of Yemen. Surprisingly and not surprisingly, the Saudis, following the early reports on the weak performance of the Southern Yemeni army, rushed to provide financial and military assistance to the Marxist regime in the PDRY.

The causes of the 1994 civil war are multi and complex. However, one of the biggest of such roots is the results of July 1993 elections and the post elections collation between the GPC and the mixed Islamist/tribal Islah party, which increased the YSP frustration and suspicion[36] of the regime in the North (Halliday, 1997) and planted the seeds of the two-month war that ended by making the first expected scenario come true-northern hegemony, which in turn turned Salih into a victorious national hero. Economically, the impact of the war on the already financially struggling ROY was disastrous. Politically, on the other hand, the war did not bring an end to the pluralism (*ta' addudiyya)* of Yemen. Instead, it brought a new political force into the 'newly opened' Yemeni political arena - the Islamists. The latter, known in Yemen, variously, as Afghan-Arabs, Salafis, Wahhabis, and the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, gained a space in the political arena as a reward for the important military role they have played in the victory of Sana'a over Aden. These new political forces, however, are not the product of the North-South war. Rather, the product of Saudi petrodollars. Since the 1970s, the influence of Saudi-inspired *salafi* practices has reinforced Yemen's North-South split. The Salafi/Wahabist practices were brought to Yemen by workers who migrated to Saudi Arabia, and through the Saudi proselytizing, mainly through the Saudi funded religious schools that were given the false title of *ma'āhid 'ilmiyya* (scientific institutions) located in major cities of North Yemen. Consequently, one of the key conflicts in the aftermath of unification took the form of heated debates about the role *Shari'a* (Islamic law) was to play in public and formal political lives: the constitutional referendum of 1991 made *Shari'a* a major source of legislation, much to the dissatisfaction of Islamists. In the aftermath of the civil war, the 1994 constitution declared Islamic law to be the main and sole source of legislation, thereby registering the defeat of the Yemeni Socialist Party.

3. 7 Salih's Regime and Political Legitimacy in Untied Yemen

In a country where climbing the political ladder often provided a short cut to the cemetery, Ali Abdullah Salih has been in power since 1978. How? In his first years in power as the president of the YAR, Salih, systematically, pursued a policy of organizing the Yemeni political life in such a way that it provides ample room for an array of exiled politicians, ex-presidents and prominent tribal leaders who were ejected by previous regimes from the political arena. To create room, Salih expanded the size of the national and presidential bodies, such as the People's Constituent Assembly and the Presidential Advisory Council (Burrowes, 1991). Schanzer (2004), on the other hand, describes such a technique as "primordial federalism", and even recommends its application for governing the torn apart post Saddam's Iraq. To root his political authority in the socially fragmented Yemen, Salih used the GPC as an umbrella that covers all domestic ideologies of tribalism, Islamism, pan Arabism and nationalism. By so doing, the GPC became a national charter for mobilizing popular support and acquiring political legitimacy. In dealing with the powerful Northern tribes, on the other hand, Salih proved to be a skilful politician. He invited the most influential tribal figure, Sheikh Al-Ahmar, and other leading Sheikhs into the political arena of the ROY. This move reflects how Salih reverted to the Imams style of using the loyalties of Northern tribes in order to coerce and command the rest of tribes in Yemen. Unlike the Imam, however, Salih did not rely, mainly, on tribal support. Instead, he paid much attention to the strengthening of the military and security apparatus. Conscription, and the reforming, training, enlarging and re-equipping of the army were his efforts in overcoming the main obstacle that faced all central authorities throughout the history of Yemen - military weakness of the state vs. the armed strength of tribes. The successful sweeps conducted by such apparatuses, against suspected militants and paramilitary

groups reveal that direct military challenges to the state have been crushed, even in the remotest areas of Yemen. This, also, reveals that resorting to bargaining, which distinguishes centre-periphery relations in unified Yemen goes hand in hand with resorting to state coercion when necessary. With such a military coercion, Salih succeeded in being the only ruler of Yemen who extended the state's authority beyond Sana'a and the major cities of the provinces. In addition to coercion and bargaining, Salih's regime has succeeded in stretching the administrative body of the state through the establishment of regional administrative and development bodies. The growth of bureaucracy and public corporations in the Yemen of Salih was made possible by the hundreds of millions spent by international donors such as the 'bastions of neoliberal orthodoxy'- IMF and the World Bank, and multilateral and bilateral development aid agencies. Their long emphasis in aiding Yemen by helping its state construction in the form of institutional building has resulted in the 'donorization' of the Yemeni bureaucracy to the extent that, today, the Yemeni public sector is "the sum of past aid projects" (Carapico, 2006). The efforts of the large number of international development agencies operating in Yemen have resulted, also, in the "accumulation of public sector entities controlled by the central executive".

But why did Salih's regime have to keep the freewheeling public discourse despite the crushing victory of the North that led to the disappearance of the PDRY regime from the Yemeni political arena? A number of authors suggest that the answer can be found in the post civil war economic hardships of Yemen - burdened with the heavy cost of the war and the drying out of Gulf fat aid, Salih's regime was desperate for financing. By indicating its commitment to the democracy discourse, Salih's regime improves its chances in accessing grants and loans from the IMF and World Bank. In my view, however, the answer lies, mainly, at the domestic level. First, attempts to

reverse the process of political liberalization that began with the unification would bring the regime into direct confrontation with the growing power of the Yemeni civil society. Second, Salih was skillful enough to understand that decentralization of power constitutes the main obstacle to his regime's legitimacy and state building in Yemen. The most appropriate way for Salih's regime to survive was, therefore, through the widening of the political arena in such a way that it accommodates tribal, religious, secular and regional identities. By so doing, such identities become less politicized and the survival of the state becomes a shared interest for all. One of the examples of such widening is the doubling in size of the so-called Presidential-appointed Consultative Council and giving such a Council the power to vote jointly with *Majlis al-Nuwwab* (the parliament) on any legislative matter of the president's choosing. In dealing with the growing opposition to the northern hegemony over the south of Yemen, to the extent that many southerners label the current northern hegemony as tribal colonization of the south. Salih adopted the policy of directing development and investment projects to the south, expanding the co-opting key southern politicians and the further weakening of the YSP. This in combination with his reliance on his loyal security and military forces have gradually made the North-South conflict less threatening to the regime's dominance than it was in the immediate aftermath of unification. Given the class structure of Yemen's weak working class, weak bourgeoisie and a strong tribal society. This Yemeni story of strengthening the political, security and administrative bodies of the state is, indeed, unusual. The conventional story of state building in weak and less developed countries revolves around how "maintaining regime power presupposes the maintenances of the state itself" (Eriksen, 2005). In other words, regime survival dominates the process of state building in weak states. Regimes, in such states have, therefore, no interest in creating strong state institutions that may pose a threat to regime

survival. In unified Yemen, however, there has been compatibility between the political and economic interests of the regime and state building.

Following unification, the defeat of the PDRY and the Gulf War. The projects of Yemeni nationalism and Arab nationalism were no longer valid as strong bases for the regime's legitimacy. The Yemeni regime had to rely, therefore, on coercion and the enlargement of the state apparatus to accommodate client networks. Economically, on the other hand, following the economic shocks of the post Cold War and Gulf War climates, Salih's regime had to strengthen the Yemeni state in order to obtain internal revenues for funding the state, e.g., customs, fees and taxes. The regime's attention to the infant oil sector - the only national savior, has also played a role in adding strength to the state. This is because building infrastructure and developing institutions that are able to provide firm state control are essential for maximizing the profitability of the sector. The 1980s oil discoveries have led, therefore, to the expansion and strengthening of the Yemeni state.

Recently, Yemen appeared on Washington's 'counter terrorism' radar screen. As a result, Washington has been strengthening the security and military base of Salih's regime. For example, American military experts have been providing training to Yemeni military and security forces and the Pentagon has supported the founding of a new coastguards division, the reorganizing of internal security forces, and the founding of an advanced anti-terror unit led by Salih's son. This new military-security restructuring, and the distinct institutional ordering that underpins it, reflects the post September 11 western intervention in building and reshaping the Yemeni state. For Salih's regime, on the other hand, such an intervention is an opportunity for refashioning its authority and role. For example, in August 2007, authorities

implemented a ban against carrying weapons in the cities and have confiscated over 150,000 weapons and closed down 200 weapons shops. Such a ban is a good indicator of the expansion of the central government reach and the increasing capacity of the Yemeni state in the field of enforcing law and order. However, the ban was limited to Sana'a and the provincial capitals. Salih's regime is conscious of the fact that chipping away, structurally, at the issue of Yemen's armed society may constitute a threat to the foundations of Yemen's fragile state. In Yemen, even after the boosting of the state coercive power, the Weberian monopoly of the state over the use of violence remains a fantasy. Such a monopoly continues to be conditioned to constant re-bargaining and negotiation at domestic and regional levels.

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CONCLUSIONS

Topography and geography played the most important role in shaping Yemen's social, political and economic structures. Yemen is the most fertile land in the Arabian Peninsula, traversed by the Indian Ocean; monsoons bring the rain and are blessed by the high mountains to capture this bounteous rainfall. In addition to this fertility, which gave rise to a large sedentary population, the rigid high mountains that surround Yemen acted, throughout history, as a chain of natural protection not only against external invasion but also against control, suppression and authoritarianism of any central government. Furthermore, the physical invulnerability of Yemen's mountainous bastions made religious sects such as Zaydism and Ismailyah survive and even flourish despite Yemen's proximity to the place of birth of hegemonic Sunni Islam. Another important factor that is particular to Yemen is that there is a coincidence of almost everything- from geographical and topographical destiny to the patterns of habitation and concentration of sects, from the shades of experienced ideologies and insecurity of economic resources to the peculiar nature of colonialism and regional power interventions. This sharp multifaceted coincidence is not something of the past. Rather, it is being felt in every bone in the political, economic and socio-cultural skeletons of

today's fragile Yemen. Here is an interesting example of such a coincidence: The Shiite Zaydis who comprise approximately 30 to 40% of the Yemeni nation have traditionally been concentrated in the rugged mountainous northern areas and in the drier flatter eastern sections of the country. In such an ecological context, pastoralism rather than farming dominated the socio-economic life. As a result, Zaydis have generally been organized along tribal patterns rather than sedentary ones. For more than a millennium, tribes in this inhospitable terrain constituted the military backbone for a string of successive despotic imams.

Despite their religiously based support to the Imams, however, tribes have often resisted any attempt from the Imams to impose their central authority and direct control. For most of its history, the Zaydi theocratic state was weakly centralized, revolved around the personality of the imam, and was in no position to combat powerful tribal structures. There is, actually, a wide agreement amongst historians of Yemen that the salient feature of any Yemeni central authority, even long before the Imamate dynasty, has been its limited capacity to penetrate and directly regulate tribes in the mountainous northern areas. Few centuries ago, a Danish botanist made a scientific expedition to Egypt and Yemen and noted the following: "The Arab Yemen is different from the Arab Egypt; here the noble live far from the centers". This observation by a botanist is politically valid in most of Yemen's ancient and modern history. The Yemeni elites have always been widely dispersed and often beyond any central control. Even in today's Yemen, in a sharp contrast to the rest of the region, authority and influence are concentrated much more around houses of powerful tribal Sheikhs than around government buildings.

The Sunni Shafis, on the other hand, who constitute the major community in Yemen, dominate the Southern highlands and coastal areas, which receive abundant monsoon rainfall. Such geographical locations made the socio-economic life of the Sunni Shafis characterized by sedentary farming and commercial tradition. Indeed, throughout the history of Yemen most of the trading activities with the outside world were channeled through the largely Shafi cities of Aden and Ta'iz. As a result, Sunni Shafis were more outward looking, and had a higher rate of emigration than the Shiite Zyadis in former North Yemen. This sectarian and mode of production division has created, over time, two different societies within Yemen, and contributed in rendering the socio-cultural incompatibility of the northern and southern communities. Another significant fact is that North Yemen, unlike almost all entities of the developing world, never came under European colonization. This means it did not inherit colonial infrastructure and had the least contact with the Western world.

The strategic location of Yemen, on the other hand, made two imperial powers, the Ottoman and the British, who have had little in common, compete in establishing footholds, mainly along the Yemeni coasts of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. The Ottomans and the British have constructed two different foundations of a modern state system in the corner of Arabia. These foundations reflect not only the different political orientations and military purposes of the Ottomans and the British in the region but also the structural differences between the two empires. The British Empire was seaborne, the Ottoman was land based; the British Empire was sustained by industrial capitalism, the Ottoman by agrarian tribute, and finally, the British Empire was the projection of a modern nation-state, while the Ottoman Empire was the projection of the survival of an archaic autocratic system of rule (Khoury & Kennedy, 2007). Despite the fluctuating scope of expansion and contraction of the Zaydi Imamate authority in the northern

entity of Yemen, its continuous existence for more than ten centuries gave the longest tradition of continuous central government in the Arabian Peninsula. This unique existence of a central authority in the southern corner of Arabia stands in sharp contrast with the deeply fragmented parallel structures of political power, which characterized the political life of many parts of the Middle East.

The imperially and theologically constructed North-South divide continued even after progressive national movements, inspired by Arabism and Socialism, dismantled the colonial, feudal and theocratic structures. Until May 1990, two separate Yemeni political communities emerged and sustained by the Cold War. Clearly, state building in the two political communities was strongly influenced by their accumulating socio-political experiences and external powers. In the case of the North, these powers were the Ottomans, the Egyptians and the Saudis. In the South, they were the British and Russians.

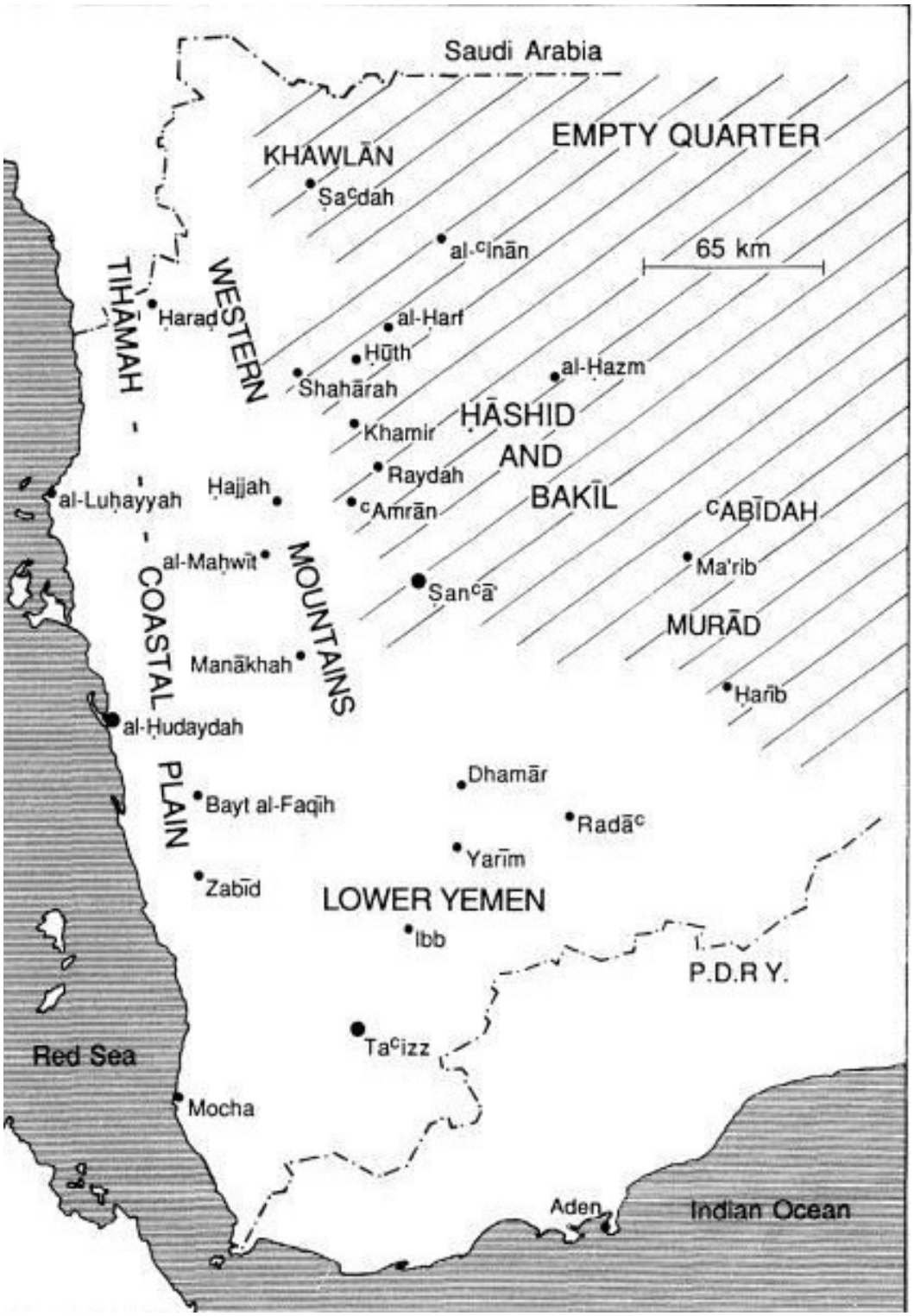
The discussion in this chapter reveals that much of the political history of modern Yemen has been defined by the intersection of political power, lineage and locality. Even in the progressive socialist South Yemen, where a radical egalitarian program was put into practice, older forms of identification and loyalty "persisted beneath the layer of radical rhetoric and policy" (Halliday, 2005). It is within this political and socio-cultural environment that traditional power elites in the modern history of Yemen emerged and evolved.

In addition to uncovering the strong contributions of the exogenous factors in the formation, building and survival of the Arab state, analyzing state building in united Yemen reveals how the democratization process came simultaneously with unification. This highlights how democracy can be a means not an end. In other words, it has been adopted,

mainly, in order to solve Yemen's economic and political problems in the post Cold War and Gulf War geopolitical climates. The case of state building in Yemen reveals how the prospect of strengthening weak states depends on the nature of domestic power relations, politics of survival, rentierism and the compatibility of state interests with the ruling elite's interests. The newly born Republic of Yemen is a new experiment in state formation in the region, which demonstrates how states in the Arab Middle East are still in the making. Finally, as a result of rampant political instability and scarcity of state financial resources many projects associated with state building in Yemen were unfulfilled, thereby also undermining possible sources of loyalty to the state. Education, for example, can inculcate national loyalty, helping to turn villagers and tribesmen into Yemenis - to paraphrase Eugen Weber's Peasants into Frenchmen (Weber, 1976). Economic development can also "purchase" allegiance, or at least cultivate utilitarian compliance. The imposition of unification via war, and the consequent political and economic marginalization of many social groups in former south Yemen, has turned the Yemeni unification into a negative experiment in the laboratory of pan Arabism and regional integration.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Tribal Factor in Political Modernization: a Lesson from Yemen



(Map. 1) The location of Yemen's two major tribal confederations of Hashid and Bakil. Source: Dresch, P. (2000).

INTRODUCTION

The creation of the modern state system and the launching of the modernization project in the Arab Middle East brought about a serious threat to the very survival of tribal structure and tribal identity in the region. The sources of such a threat were numerous: the defining of the political and administrative boundaries of the state, the notion of citizenship, rapid urbanization and the centralization of power in the hands of governments that were aided by large military and administrative bodies. Nevertheless, in the case of Yemen, as in the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, Jordan, Libya, and Iraq, decades after the process of state formation and political modernization was launched, tribal identity and tribal political culture have not disappeared. Rather, tribes remain dominant systems of cultural meanings, and the imprint of tribal values is evident in the political structure and decision-making process of the state. This unique Middle Eastern reality poses a number of challenging questions: why does tribal identity and tribal political culture persist in the modern political system of the Arab world when the structural framework for the social reproduction of tribal life no longer exists? Why do both monarchial and republican Arab regimes draw heavily on tribal symbols and practices and make themselves vulnerable to the political ideologies of tribal life?

Clearly, no answers to these questions can be found in the assumptions of Modernization Theory (MT). The MT positions ‘primordial attachments’ such as tribalism in direct conflict with civil loyalties and stresses their incompatibility with full participation in a modern nation-state. The theory assumed that such attachments are ‘un-pragmatic’ pre-national identifications that are soon to be replaced with class-consciousness and citizenship awareness. Today, however, it has become evident that the launching of the modernization project in the Arab Middle East did not lead to national integration and harmony. Instead, it led to the aggravation of pre-national identities such as Islamism and tribalism, and to the intensification

of state-society conflicts over the allocation of economic goods. Furthermore, despite the progress of political modernization in the region, state-led reconstruction of tribalism and manipulation of 'tribe' continue to be a prominent feature in contemporary Middle Eastern politics. With this in mind, this chapter concerns itself with studying state-tribe relations in unified Yemen - the most tribal and least developed state in the region, but with a rich party pluralism.

The chapter starts with a theoretical debate about the study of 'tribe' and tribalism in the Middle East. This is followed by a discussion of the tribal discourse in the modern Arab political life. In order to situate the Yemeni case, this section discusses state-tribe relations in two tribal republics with revolutionary backgrounds - Libya and Iraq. The section detects the pattern of construction-deconstruction-reconstruction of tribalism in the two cases and attempts to expose the role of oil and political/economic crises behind the prolonging of the transition from the tribal situation to the political community dictated by the international system. The rest of the chapter is allocated to discovering how the Yemeni tribes reacted to the creation of a centralized state; which policies did the state in the YAR, PDRY and ROY pursue toward tribes and how the 'tribe' influences modern political institutions and transition to democracy. The chapter shall endeavor to revise scholarly works that challenge the oversimplified and static description of tribalism. Inspired by such works, the chapter shall attempt to highlight the compatibility rather than the contradiction between the notions of state and 'tribe'. The three main arguments of the chapter are: First, in the presence of geopolitical pressures and economic crisis which threaten the survival of the regime, state leaders of Arab tribal countries secure their own position through the promotion of tribalism instead of risking the use of violence. Second, pre national identifications such as tribal identity are not the impulse behind political and economic demands in the Arab Middle East. Rather, they are vehicles for those demands. Third, the Yemeni 'tribe' is the most influential actor in the Yemeni modern political arena, and

it is a socio-political force that acts as a buffer between state authoritarianism and society. Throughout the chapter, the term ‘tribe’ shall appear in quotation mark to alert the reader to the multiple meanings and interpretations of the term.

The chapter understands ‘tribe’ and tribalism not as a way of life that is grounded in ecology and economy. Rather as an identity that is grounded in culture and politics. In addition to the growing need for understanding the links between the ‘tribe’, state and democracy in the region, the topic under discussion in this chapter is timely - in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, ‘tribe’ and tribalism in the Arab Middle East have come under unprecedented scrutiny in the West. Such a scrutiny was motivated by the socio-cultural context of the host country of Bin Laden – Afghanistan - and by the fact that the majority of the 9/11 hijackers are citizens of a conservative tribal society - Saudi Arabia. In light of this, a plethora of American journalistic reports, policy and strategic papers highlight an intimate relationship between tribalism, authoritarianism and violent Islamism. Washington’s hostile attitude towards tribalism in the region became even more intense following the disastrous failure of the US geopolitical project in Iraq. The main objectives of this chapter are, therefore, to question the current misconception of the links between violent Islamism, authoritarianism and the ‘tribe’, and to furnish a better understanding of the role of tribalism in shaping the process of political modernization in Arab tribal republics.

Methodological Approach

This chapter draws on the recent body of scholarship that transcends the traditional state-tribe dichotomy, and criticizes the notion of the state as an autonomous political actor. For example the works of Nazih Ayubi (1995), Khoury and Kostiner (1990), Roger Owen (1992), Sami Zubaida (1993), Yoav Alon (2006), Amatzia Baram (1997), Dale Eickelman (2002), Timothy Mitchell (1991), and others. The mentioned works suggest new methodological tools

for analyzing state-tribe relations in the modern Middle East, illuminate the different ways Middle Eastern tribes have reacted to the formation of states and provide a better understanding of the degrees of autonomy and subordination in the interaction between 'tribe' and central government. According to this renewed theoretical interest in the nature of the Middle Eastern state and its relation with society, the state is a 'political field' in which many actors compete for resources and influence. On the basis of this literature, the chapter understands the politicization of Yemeni tribes not as an attempt at overthrowing the state and replacing it by a tribal order. Rather, as an attempt at extracting maximum political concessions and economic benefits from the state.

4.1 Middle Eastern Tribes in Modern Settings: a Theoretical Debate

Being the most enduring social entity in the Middle East, the 'tribe' has played a significant role in shaping not only the history and culture of the Arab Middle East but also state formation and mode of governance in the region. The study of 'tribe' and tribalism has attracted, therefore, historians, anthropologists and political scientists. While anthropologists invested their academic energy in conducting anthropological micro-studies of specific communities, historians favored the study of particular historical case studies, mostly related to tribes within Islamic Empires, and political scientists showed their interest in exploring the links between tribes and state formation and maintenance. For a while, however, a number of anthropologists and historians of the region viewed the 'tribe' as a self-contained entity that is created by autochthonous factors. This resulted in generating literature that lacked deeper analysis of the external/internal political conditions in which tribal structures in the region are maintained and reproduced. In addition, a number of anthropological works tended to conflate 'folk sociology' and operational concepts[37], and treat the 'tribe' not only as a far simpler unit than the state, but also as an entity that occupies a lower rung on an evolutionary ladder of

political life (Dresch, 1990). Another research shortcoming was committed by some anthropologists who on the basis of the mosaic metaphor and the structuralist/functionalist[38] approach portrayed a timeless and clearly demarcated Middle Eastern 'tribe' that has no room for gradations. In recent years, however, anthropologists of the region began to pay attention to the fact that tribes and states in the Middle East, as well as leading to the formation of states, also sustained each other. As a result, anthropologists along with representatives of the other disciplines took further steps towards understanding the contextual role of broad internal/external forces in forming and sustaining Middle Eastern tribes. This scholarly shift has contributed much to the current downplaying of the evolutionary approach, in furnishing a better understanding of the links between state formation and the 'tribe', on the one hand, and the impact of such links on shaping and reshaping the mode of governance and state-society relations in the region, on the other. Interestingly, in the substantial literature produced on the topic by the three disciplines, the *Muqaddimah* of the 13th Century North African sociologist Ibn Khaldun stands as a prominent theoretical point of departure. In such a literature, the Khaldunian cycle remains a valuable theory for understanding the socio-economic and political consequences of the historical interactions between tribal culture and urban civilization in the Middle East. According to Ibn Khaldun, "A dynasty rarely establishes itself firmly in lands with many different tribes and groups. This is because of differences in opinions and desires. Behind each opinion and desire there is group feeling defending it (Rosenthal, 1967). Ibn Khaldun refers to this group feeling as *assabiyyah* (cohesion or solidarity). According to him, asabiyya is the feeling that enabled militarily superior tribes to conquer urbanized regions, build regimes and civilizations, and eventually became sedentarized. These conquests, according to him, were undone by the tribes' gradual loss of *'asabiyyah* in the urban setting, leading to new conquests by tribal peoples still strong in desert cohesiveness (Darling, 2007). The latter, according to Ibn Khaldun, begins to fracture the moment state wealth is seized. His remarkable

observation that those (*al-ri'asa fi ahl al-asabiyya)* is still being echoed by observers of contemporary Iraq (Jaber, 2000).

Another Khaldunian key-term that has proved useful for today's students of state formation in tribal Arab societies is *iltiham* (the process of coalition building). According to Salame, the Khaldunian iltiham is "the ultimate form of hegemony in its insistence on social integration by and around the ideology professed by the ruling 'asabiyya"(Salame, 1990). Scholars continue to appreciate, also, the Khaldunian view regarding the impact of the physical location of tribes on determining the degree of governance from the core (Bergman, 1975). Living in desert regions and inaccessible mountains, tribes, according to Ibn Khaldun, have acquired the skill of escaping their obligations to the state, especially when the central government is weak. The Khaldunian term for areas under formal state control is "the lands of treasury", and for peripheral areas dominated by tribes "the lands of dissidence". Today's scholarly agreement with Ibn Khaldun appears in the argument that old Middle Eastern forms of social identification, such as tribalism, persisted in the peripheral areas beyond state control or in rural areas where the state practiced indirect governance through tribal authorities[39], and in the observation that central governments in the region, whether imperial, colonial or national, have always regarded nomadic tribes with suspicion and fear. The latter was due to the physical threat that tribes posed to cities and agricultural settlements. Another valid Khaldunian view is the one regarding the dynamic equilibrium of opposition between tribal nomads (*bedu*) and settlers (*hadar*). Because tribes were difficult to tax and constituted a physical threat to the *hadar*, governments have regarded them with suspicion. A prominent observer of Syria reflects on this and notes how the patriarchal tribal milieu traditionally contested with the city for control of the village in Syria (Hinnebusch, 1982). Peterson (1977), on the other hand, argues that throughout the span of Middle Eastern history, the *bedu-hadar* relationship has always been characterized by mutual mistrust and at the same time by mutual need. Ironically, despite

all the above-mentioned interdisciplinary support of the sociological perspectives of Ibn Khaldun on the 'tribe', there is no consensus among the various disciplines regarding the very definition and contents of 'tribe' in the Middle East[40]. This can be attributed to a number of reasons. First, anthropological attempts to formulate a detailed, universally applicable definition of 'tribe' have fallen foul of exceptions. Second, the notion of 'tribe' is one of "the more difficult forms of cultural identities for Westerners (and, for that matter, many urbanized Middle Easterners) to comprehend" (Eickelman, 1982). Third, tribes found throughout the region are diverse polities that "differ from one another in their internal political structure"(Salzman, 1974). Fourth, in the Middle East, the distinction between tribal and non-tribal "does not correspond in any significant way between indigenous and settler populations" (Beteille, 1998). The majority of Middle Eastern tribes today do not move. Tribal populations, for instance, in Yemen, Iraq, Algeria and Iran are farmers. Fifth, the confrontation between the tribal and settled peoples in the region did not lead, as it did in other parts of the world, to the destruction of the 'tribe'. On the contrary, the confrontation often led to the defeat and withdrawal of urban and village peoples. In the Arabian Peninsula, for example, tribal families who emerged from isolated and non-strategic locations into the hinterland of Arabia established states. Finally, unlike the African context of 'tribe', the Arab 'tribe' can be a subdivision of the 'ethnie'. The Allawites of Syria, for instance, are ethnically Arabs but are organized into four different tribes- Matawira, Haddadin, Khayyatin and Kalbiyya, and three religious sub-sects: Shamsis, Qamaris and Murshidin (Tibi, 1990). With this definitional problem in mind, how can researchers using a political science approach have a satisfactory definition of 'tribe'? I suggest that such a definition should be capable of distinguishing the 'tribe' from other sub-national entities, such as ethnic groups, which are not necessarily political organizations; from political parties that are not territorial; and from state-administrative units whose members owe allegiance only to the state. There is, yet, no such definition available. For the time being,

Hourani and Tapper's definitions seem to be the most useful available ones for studying the Middle Eastern 'tribe'. According to Hourani, the word 'tribe' can be used to indicate two kinds of social entity. The first is a natural phenomenon of rural society. Groups in such a society, whether agricultural or pastoral, cohere 'because of the need for certain types of cooperation plowing and harvesting, the periodic redistribution of land, and sometimes defense" (Beteille, 1998). Hourani explains further that kinship bonds arise among these groups "because of the group's isolation from others, the need to keep land in family, or the need to establish binding personal relations with those with whom one has common interests" (Hourani, 1990). The second entity is the larger groups that can be identified only by certain traits such as the *assabiyah* of Ibn Khaldun. In these groups, kinship is replaced by common lineage or ancestry, which revolves around a myth. Tapper's (1983), on the other hand, stresses that 'tribe' is " a localized group in which kinship is the dominant idiom of organization, and whose members consider themselves culturally distinct…tribes are usually politically unified, though not necessarily under a central leader…They do not usually relate directly with the state, but only through…intermediate structures". Being aware of the ambiguity and flexibility of the term, Tapper (1990) suggests that 'tribe' is a notion that is defined situationally and contextually by tribespeople. To this debate I wish to add that unlike the state, tribal territories are not precisely defined, and unlike 'tribe', the state may encapsulate many different communities. Another theoretically challenging but more stimulating 'tribe'-related discussion is the one that addresses the tense relationship between tribalism and the other three competing major identities in the region- nation-state, Arab nationalism and the Islamic Umma. In these discussions, reference is often made to how Arabs have managed to transcend their old religious beliefs in favor of Islam, but they were not able to rid themselves of their tribal and clan affiliations for the sake of the Islamic Umma. In his Tribe vs. Islam, Mamoun Fandy makes this point very clearly when he argues that "When Islam and the tribe face off in Arab

politics, it is almost inevitably the tribe that wins' (Fandy, 1994). Arab nationalism, on the other hand, even when it is shared with the Islamic Umma project of the 19th century with the same goals and leaders, e.g. Rifa'ah al-Tahtawi, Abdul-Rahman al-Kawakibi and Muhammed Abduh, have failed to encapsulate tribal loyalty at the local level (Yavuz, 1995). The same can be observed at the nation-state level. Barakat (1993), for instance, examines the Saudi case and notes how the Saudi royal family has succeeded in stitching together "a mosaic of tribes into a nation-state", yet, "the tribes continue to distinguish between two aspects of this political system: the dawla, or modern state bureaucracy, and the hukuma, or members of the Saudi royal family. Their allegiance is to the latter rather than the former". In other words, their allegiance is to al-Saud the branch of Anizah tribe.

4. 2 The Tribal Discourse and the Modern State in the Arab World

Successfully integrated states are those who are able to transcend ethnic, religious, cultural or other divisions within their borders. To achieve this, political elites rely upon what Hartshorne calls 'state-idea'. According to Hartshorne, such an idea "convinces all the people in all the regions [of the state] that they belong together" (Hartshorne, 1950). For diffusing such an idea and propagating an inclusive national self-image that undermines the colonially inherited mismatch between the inhabitants and their newly created states, Arab regimes relied upon three main channels - the mass media, the education system and the army. Such political engineering, however, proved to not be an easy task, especially in Arab states with deep internal cleavages. The task was complicated by the fact that developing a single national identity cannot proceed without an effective state. In other words, national identity building and state building are entwined (Talentino, 2004). This touches on the dilemma of the process of political modernization (PMM) in the Arab world.

Being born with fundamental geographical flaws, as economically and politically fragile entities that are caught into a strong web of international geopolitical interests, lacking harmony between their external modern form and their internal traditional contents, and suffering from serious problems of legitimacy and weak institutional building, modern Arab states came into existence as political units that are difficult to manage by following Western-centric ideals of the PPM. A closer look at the external/internal conditions that determine state-society relations in Arab tribal societies reveals the particularity, complexity and, indeed, the drama of the PMM in the Middle East. Textbooks of modern political history of the region inform us that from Iraq in the north down to the Arabian Peninsula and west all the way to Morocco, tribal units have, for centuries, not only coexisted but also competed with rural and urban settlements. The problem of integrating such units had to be, therefore, in the political agenda of all political elites in the region. The Ottomans, the French, the British, the Italians, Arab kings, Imams, Sultans and revolutionary military officers, and most lately Washington-based neocolonialists, all have attempted, with various degrees of success and failure, to destroy, co-opt, subordinate and manipulate tribes.

To situate the Yemeni case, I shall spend some time looking at state-tribe relations in Libya and Iraq. The two countries and Yemen constitute the Arab republics where tribal banners fly next to national flags. What differentiates these tribal republics from monarchial tribal states in the region is the fact that Nasserism-inspired middle-class, not tribal sheikhs, made a breakthrough at the centre. By contrasting the three republics I hope to expose the geographical, historical, colonial, economic and political factors that have shaped the PPM in different tribal Arab states.

4.2.1 The Libyan Case

My first case is Libya - an accidental Arab state and, indeed, as Hinnebusch (1979) put it, a "unique specimen in the Middle East political aquarium". Libya was born in 1951 as a tribal/theocratic monarchy led by King Idris[41]. The formation of the country, however, was not the culmination of a nationalist struggle, but rather because none of the victorious allies knew what to do with it following the defeat of the Italian fascist forces in North Africa[42]. From the first day of its establishment, Libya was confronted with a formidable set of nation-building problems. To begin with, the country was suffering from acute integrative problems that prevented the birth of a unitary state. Prior to its hastily arranged independence, Libya was, for centuries, divided geographically, politically and culturally into three distinct regions- Fezzan, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. The vast desert that separates those regions made spatial interaction so minimal that the interaction between Tripolitania and Tunis, and Cyrenica and Egypt was greater than the interaction between the Libyan regions. A loose federation and a rotating location for the capital were, therefore, the only prospect for long-term national unity.

In addition to the sharp regional cleavage, Libya, on the eve of its independence, was a country that was ravaged by the long war against the brutal Italian occupation, and lacked a sense of nationhood among the population. Physical, social and economic infrastructures were

non-existent. Most of the population were illiterate tribal/rural people, three currencies were in use and salvaging scrap metal from World War II was the biggest nonagricultural source of income. A glance at the system of governance in the newly established poor Arab monarchy reveals, according to First (1972), how authority was "unwritten in the constitution, but it was this court government of trusted advisors and confidants among tribal nobility". Despite the dire need of the new state for an effective bureaucracy and competent agencies to manage the sudden wealth generated as a result of the 1959 discovery of oil, the Libyan monarchy continued its policy of filling official key posts on the basis of tribal and family connections.

The tribal element constituted, therefore, an "integral part of the political leadership" (Salem, 1973) in monarchial Libya. During the period 1952-1969, the tribal and familial influence was so strong that many Libyans believed that their destiny and welfare were determined by a number of families. The dominance of prominent families representing prestigious tribes in independent Libya marked, as Lisa Anderson (1990) notes, "the dilution of ideologically egalitarian tribal organization and the transition to market and bureaucracy- based clientelism for distribution and regulation". By the 1960s, it was becoming clear that the Libyan monarchy was unable to resolve the contradictions between its tribal and state attachments. A good example of such contradictions is the drawing of the state's local administrative boundaries on the basis of tribal lines and the appointment of tribal sheikhs as the local administrative officials.

This unstable balance between state and tribal tendencies resulted in massive government corruption and deep mistrust of state institutions by large segments of the Libyan society. Obviously, under such socio-political conditions, the national modernization project was misguided, sluggish and, above all, out of touch with the radical political and socio-economic changes taking place in Libya's neighboring countries. The Nasserism-inspired September 1969 revolution led by Qaddafi and the 'free officers' brought an end to the tribal

monarchy of Idris, and ushered in a new episode in state-society relations and political modernization in Libya. From the start, and despite the tribal background[43] of Qaddafi and his colleagues who made the coup, the new regime was ambivalent about tribes. In the first statement of the newly formed Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the new regime vowed to create a new Libyan society constructed upon the principles of freedom, modernization and socialism. For this to take place, the statement adds, it is essential to dismantle the existing structures at all levels, and replace them with "new institutions and personnel better suited to the needs of a modernizing society" (Fathlay & Palmer, 1980).

The legitimacy of traditional local elites, according to the RCC, is based upon tribal and religious foundations that hamper the transformation of Libya into a modern socialist state. The RCC view the tribal/religious elite as a part of the past, and cannot, therefore, be counted on to lead the national project of progress. In line with the RCC's statement, the revolutionary regime adopted three basic strategies for breaking down the power base of local tribal Sheikhs and for disrupting tribal and regional loyalties.

The first strategy concerned itself with the abolishing of the tribal legal code and the dismantling of the tribal administrative boundaries. The redrawing of the latter was carried out, at both the local and provincial levels, in such a way that sections of several tribes were included in each administrative unit. The second strategy focused on replacing rural elites with better-educated younger Libyans who 'shared the values of the revolutionary government'. This move included the dismissal of all governors, mayors and deputy mayors, most of whom were tribal sheikhs or their relatives. The third strategy was about the establishing of a single political party, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), which is responsible for "shifting popular loyalties away from the traditional leaders and toward the central government, and for mobilizing mass support for the RCC's reform programs"(Fathaly & Palmer, 1990). However, three years after the implementation of the above-mentioned strategies, the traditional tribal

elite continued to dominate the power structure in rural areas and tribal affiliations retained much of its past importance.

In response to the failure of the RCC to penetrate the rural/tribal masses, the regime launched a new campaign in the Fall of 1973, with the objective of accelerating the pace of modernization and development in areas with strong tribal affiliations. One of the most important measures in the new campaign was the granting of total authority in local matters to a Soviet-style pyramid of locally elected assemblies called Rural People's Committees (RPC). One of the main tasks of the RPC's was to "elect provincial and ultimately national bodies vested in principle with powers of legislation and control of the executive" (Hinnebusch, 1979). To the disappointment of the central government, one of the first decisions of the RPC was the immediate dismissal of almost all the modernizing administrators appointed by the RCC and their replacement with local figures who were less modern in orientation than the administrators appointed by the new regime, yet more modern than the traditional local elites appointed by the old regime. In an attempt at evaluating the mobilizational failure of the RCC in rural/tribal areas, the Libyan government sponsored in the 1970s a field research with the aim of profiling the political attitudes of rural elites, and mapping the nature of their popular support[44]. The conclusion of the research confirmed the strong tribal and religious attachments of those elites and their hostility to the administrators appointed by the RCC and their resentment of the creation of the ASU. Dissatisfied with the level of revolutionary zeal displayed by the rural/tribal masses, Qaddafi's regime had to modify its original radical discourse, and look for a model of political and socio-economic modernization that could accommodate the Arab socialist revolutionary ideas and tribal/Islamic values. The regime's solution to the appearing inability of the RCC and ASU to bridge the gap between the state ideology and society norms was a mixture of "puritanical desert Islam", "radical mass-organizational practices" and the ceasing of hostility towards 'tribe' and tribalism. In his

‘Social Basis for the Third Universal Theory’, the ‘revolutionary’ and ‘progressive’ Qaddafi reveals this regime’s shifting of gears: “To the individual man, the family is more important than the state…..Mankind, as a matter of fact, is the individual and the family, not the state…..a tribe is a family which has grown as a result of procreation. It follows that a tribe is a big family. Equally, a nation is a tribe which has grown through procreation. The nation, then, is a big tribe” (Anderson, in Khoury & Kostnier, 1990). This Qaddafian tribal discourse stands in sharp contrast to Qaddafi’s previous ambivalent attitude towards tribal values and tribal structure. By the end of the 1970s, the emerging Libyan model of political modernization seemed to rest upon a notion of ‘Islamic Arab Tribal Socialism’, which is a blend of Arab nationalism, Islamic principals, the socialist welfare state and tribal values.

The application of this bizarre ideological cocktail was accompanied by using the huge inflow of petrodollars for influencing tribal leaders. Undoubtedly, the oil factor played a significant part in supporting the regime’s ideological experimentations. The growing oil revenues allowed Qaddafi’s revolutionary regime to establish a populist welfare state resting on “increased minimum wages, popular housing programs, rent control, the distribution of lands seized from foreign settlers, and expanded government employment” (Hinnebusch, 1984). Such measures, however, failed to counterbalance traditional forces of tribalism. Crash modernization was at the heart of such a failure. Rushing the traditional Libyan society into the twentieth century had high costs. The Bureaucracy, for example, was extremely wasteful, and massive rapid urbanization eroded Libyas’ agricultural base. People of Libya, on the other hand, were “becoming a non-productive, dependent leisure class”. As a result, a new “comprador bourgeoisie’ was formed (Hinnebusch, 1984).

In addition to manipulating tribal symbols such as receiving dignitaries and journalists in a camel-skin tent, attired in a Bedouin garb over Western style causal wear, Qaddafi began to rely heavily on his own tribe - Qathathfa. For example, junior army officers from the Qathathfa

were promoted and entrusted with sensitive military posts, and all strategic positions with the regime had been filled by the Qathathfa tribe- e.g. Ahmed Qathaf al-Damm responsible for Cyrenacia region; Masoud Abdul-Hafith as the commander of military security; Misbah Abdul-Hafith for Benghazi sector; Khalifa Ihneish as commander of domestic security; Mohammed al-Majthoub al-Qaddafi as the leader of the revolutionary committee….etc[45]. Other important but less strategic positions were filled by Maghrha and Warfala tribes. The latter tribe enjoys blood ties to the Qathathfa, and the former has blood ties with the family of Qaddafi's wife.

Which conceptual perspective can help us to understand this state tribalism in the modern, oil-wealth, and supposedly revolutionary/ socialist Libya? Is it the 'distributive state' argument of Delacroix (1980), which stresses that traditional structures are activated in distributive state systems because the relation between the mass and the elite is not based on class relation? According to Delacroix, "the more recently incorporated into the world economy a society, the more available are its traditional social structures. Hence, a distributive state ruling a recently incorporated society will experience a maximum of tribal, ethnic and religious challenges". Or is it Anderson's argument that tribalism in Qaddafi's Libya is a "rejection of the state and a refusal to accept its criteria for social and political organization"(Anderson, 1990). Or is it Roumani's (1983) 'luxury of oil' factor, which prolonged the suspension of the transition of Libya from the tribal situation to the political community? While all the above arguments are useful in understanding the internal dynamics behind the construction of state tribalism, they are, however, not enough to explain the regime's reconstruction of tribalism. In my view, the most likely answer for this reconstruction lies beyond the borders of the Jamahiriya: the failure of Qaddafi's pan-Arabism project, the failure of the regime's adventure in Chad, the UN sanctions and international/regional isolation. Going back to state tribalism was not related, therefore, to the slow development of the relations of production. Instead, it was a survival strategy at a time of crisis.

Qaddafi's radical visions and actions have failed in atomizing traditional social tissues, and in generating a new political culture. Hinnebusch (1984) attributes this failure to Qaddafi's lack of the Leninist organizational weapons. A glance at state-tribe relations in the modern history of Libya reveals a pattern of constructed-deconstructed- reconstructed tribalism. The Ottomans carried out the construction (unlike their policy in Iraq) and applied three strategies in dealing with the Libyan tribes: diplomacy, restricted military actions and the appeal to Islam (Cordell, 1985). Further construction was carried out by the Italian occupation. The brutality of the Italian forces united, for the first time in centuries, Libyan tribes under one banner, namely the theocratic banner of al-Sanusi. During the time of the conservative monarchy of Idris, strengthening and maintaining the foundations of tribalism was essential for maintaining the theocratic system of governance. The deconstruction of tribalism, on the other hand, was an obvious outcome of a socialism-inspired revolution. Finally, and from a practical point of view, Qaddafi's reconstruction of state tribalism should be seen as a tool used for repairing the cracks in the ideological foundations and political structure of the state. Theoretically, on the other hand, such a reconstruction can be seen as an illustration of how the boundaries between state and 'tribe' in the Middle East are not fixed but subject to constant adjustment in response to changing economic and political circumstances.

4.2.2 The Iraqi Case

My next stop is Iraq - the most violent marketplace of identities in the region. Unlike Libya, this is not an accidental Arab state. Iraq is the outcome of a deliberate colonial project designed and implemented by a "handful of British officials…acting with almost whimsical self-assurance"(Hudson, 1977). For three centuries (1638 until 1918) prior to the British project, Iraq was made of three distinct Ottoman provinces -Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. This division is very similar to the one found in Libya, not only in terms of the number of provinces

but also in terms of regional cleavage and external orientations: Mosul oriented towards Turkey, Baghdad towards Iran and Basra towards the Arabian Gulf and India. The term 'Iraqi' as a level of identification appeared only at the beginning of the 20th Century. Before that, people of Iraq were identified as Baghdadi, Basrawi and Mosuli. Even the Shiite religious identification was sub-classified into urban Shiite and tribal Shiite (Al Ateyah, 1988).

The Ottomans succeeded in disrupting the long established Iraqi sedentary agricultural and tribal structures. The latter structure was a system of hierarchy constructed on the basis of mode of substance, with camel-breeding tribes at the top followed by sheep breeders, peasants and marsh dwellers at the bottom of the scale. The former, on the other hand, placed rice planters at the top followed by vegetable growers and artisans at the bottom. The Ottomans, thanks to their gunpowder and long stable rule, have altered power relations in this hierarchical social structure in the favor of the settled areas (Jaber, 2000). The camel-breeding aristocracy, for instance, were turned into tax-farmers and assigned the task of collecting tax on behalf of the central government. Other agents in the former structure were given tribal functions such as water distribution, land registration and law enforcement. In addition to this, the Ottomans introduced the concept of communal land ownership. By the 20th Century these altering measures resulted in developing tribal divisions based on the landed and the landless. The former, however, gradually established their own military forces to protect their lands and enforce their will. As a result, the elite of the Ottoman Iraqi countryside were made of landlords who were previously tribal chieftains. The British colonial administration, however, altered the Ottoman's halt to the Khaldunian cycle. With the British importation of a tribal Hashemite king to rule an artificial entity that is deeply divided along sectarian and ethnic lines, tribalism presented itself as the only binding social force in a country that lacks a convincing raison d'être. Not surprisingly, the role of tribal sheikhs during the British control has been strengthened. A number of regulations and laws such as the 1924 Tribal Dispute Regulations

and the 1933 Law governing the Rights and Duties of Cultivators have given tribal sheikhs unprecedented power over their tribesmen. With the toppling down of the Hashemite monarchy in 1958 at the hands of yet another group of Arab 'free officers', the role of tribal sheikhs began to decline. A phase of detribalization was ushered by Qasim's regime; characterized by abolishing the above-mentioned laws, encouraging migration to cities and implementing agrarian reform. In their attempt at breaking the power base of tribal sheikhs, Qasim and his "Free Offices" allocated more space in the socio-political arena for the emerging middle class. They failed, however, to take into account the importance of allocating a similar space for ethnic and religious groups[46]. Further reading of this period until the 2nd Ba'ath takeover in July 1968 is dominated by assassinations and four violent regime changes. These upheavals in less than one decade have resulted in creating a fractured Iraqi political culture without a national focus or attachment to a political community. In such a political milieu characterized by rapid violent political changes, clan and 'tribe' provided the Iraqis with shelter and a safety net. One can argue that when a state is struggling to find its nation, it is natural for society to return to its pre-national identifications. Another dramatic episode in Iraq's state-society relations started on the eve of the 1968 rise of the Ba'ath party. In its first communiqué the Ba'ath denounced tribalism: "We are against religious sectarianism (*al-ta ifiyya)*, racism and tribalism (*al-qabaliyya)*". All these, according to the Ba'ath, were ills and "remnants of colonialism". The party's criticism of 'tribe' and tribalism went further to the extent of accusing tribal sheikhs and tribalism of being the "epitome of backwardness and social reaction"[47]. In almost the same tone as the Libyan revolution, the Iraqi Ba'ath party regarded tribalism as a major obstacle on the road to transforming the existing Iraqi society and creating a new 'Arab man'. This hostility toward tribalism should be seen, as Baram (1997) explains, not only through an ideological lens but also through a pragmatic one: the majority of the Ba'ath members were urban lower middle-class youth from Baghdad and Nasiriyya. Tribal sheikhs represented therefore a

"competing social elite" that should be, at least, marginalized. To achieve this, the new Ba'ath took many steps beyond Qasim's detribalization measures - for example the May 1969 law of limiting land ownership, the establishment of government controlled cooperatives and associations and state expropriation of large areas from strong tribes that were close to Baghdad. These measures of transforming state-society relations from tribally based into class based were designed, mainly, to "separate tribal peasants from their shaykhly landlords". Saddam's ascendance to presidency in 1979, however, marks a departure from the detribalization of the Iraqi political system. Just like Qaddafi, Saddam surrounded himself with circles made of his family and clan members and filled the Iraqi political establishment with his tribe people. Tikrit became the main supply of his personal guards, Republican Guards and Special Republican Guards. Furthermore, officers with tribal backgrounds in all army units were promoted more rapidly than others. The quantum leap toward tribalism, however, took place in the 1980s-1990s, a period of two devastating major wars, a seriously destabilizing Shiite Intifada, harsh economic sanctions and the regional/international isolation of Iraq. In this period, Sad dam "tore away the rhetorical veil which was designed to cover the true face of his social power"(Baram, 1979), and his retribalization policy was exposed under the glaring sun of Iraq. He did so for a number of reasons. One is that Arab tribal identity could serve as a buffer between the Iraqis and the Iranians. Second, during the long war with Iran and the destruction of the Iraqi army in the Kuwaiti adventure, the regime was in great need of political and military support from tribal sheikhs. The latter's tribal militias were the best option for saving the regime from having to spread its army units too thinly. At the heart of this state-sponsored retribalization was the turning of tribal leaders into legitimate partners for power sharing, and giving more prominence to the tribes than the rest of the masses in Iraq. The following are few of the many symbolic and down to earth practical measures of retribalization that illustrate the conscious policy of what Jaber (2000) calls "etatist tribalism". To begin with,

tribes and their sheikhs were given a prominent space in the Iraqi media. Letters and telegrams sent by tribal leaders on important national and religious events, and on Saddam's birthday, for instance, received much media publicity, and for the first time state controlled television broadcasted visits of tribal sheikhs to the presidential palace. The regime extended such symbolism into the provinces; government's tribal guesthouses called *mudif al-sayyid al-ra'is* (Guest House of the Lord the President) were established at the head offices of governorates and municipalities where senior government officials at the provincial level consult with tribal chiefs. At the presidential palace, on the other hand, a tribal sheikh was put in charge of presidential contacts with tribes. In return for their utmost loyalty to the regime, tribal leaders were granted not only land and small arms but also diplomatic passports (Jaber, 2000). In addition, the abolished tribal justice system was revitalized. The most astonishing part in this new policy was the tribalization of the very Ba'ath party. The Ba'ath, Saddam said, is "the tribe of all the tribes". Here we can't avoid wondering why there was this ideological spin of 180 degrees in revolutionary Iraq and Libya. Why the very same regimes that came out so forcefully against tribalism and perceived it as feudalism and as a an obstacle to backwardness that hampers the creation of a 'new modern Arab man' have reactivated tribal networks and made them extensions of the state? At regime level, the conventional answer could be as simple as this: adjustments in regimes power base. Another likely answer, however, can be found in the culturally laden concept of trust. As a result of the stagnation at the apex of the political pyramid of governance, the crisis of legitimacy and the state's suspicion of educated middle class urbanists. Tribes become more worthy of regime's trust. At society level, on the other hand, the answer can be found in the train of events that led to the urban-led marginalization and manipulation of the 'tribe', and to the failure of the regimes to bridge the psychological distance between the dominant urban politico-cultural life and the traditional countryside life. The consequences are that familial-ethnic-tribal-kin groups became the reference and sources

of trust and survival for the majority in the heavily populated countryside in the Arab world. The tragic situation in today's torn apart Iraq confirms how, after decades of state formation and modernization, primordial ties remain in the physical, social, economic, emotional and psychological shelter of the masses. In addition to illustrating how state-tribe relations in the region are the outcome of divergent and changing types of colonial penetration and post independence state ideologies, the cases of Libya and Iraq reflect the traditional Middle Eastern politics of patrimonial leadership that 'consist of a chain of vertical manipulation and horizontal competition that cuts through the sociopolitical fabric"(Bill & Springborg, 2000). The two cases reflect, also, how tribalism can serve as an alternative mode of governance at times of crisis. Another lesson to be learned from the two cases is the close relationship between bureaucratic penetration and tribalism. The latter has been revitalized when the former fails to bridge the gap between state ideology and local culture. Finally, although Libya and Iraq are 'inclusionary states' where the personal autocracy of the political leaders is complemented by high bureaucracy, armed forces and "various mass mobilization organizations"(Kamrava, 2005). The PPM in the two republics could not proceed without the maintenance of a kind of balance between state and 'tribe'. In what follows, an effort will be made to review the evidence as regards the Yemeni case to see what it may contribute to a better understanding of the role of 'tribe' in political modernization in the Middle East.

4. 3 State-Tribe Relations in the Celtic Fringe of Arabia: The Yemeni Lesson

> "The choice is between Afghanistan and Yemen. Yemen's topography is mountainous, and its people are tribal and armed, and allow one to breathe clean air unblemished by humiliation". (Bin Laden, 1996).

There could scarcely be a more appropriate part of the Arab Middle East in which to study the influence of 'tribe' in shaping the PPM and mode of governance than the Republic of Yemen (ROY). In this poor and only republic in a neighbourhood of wealthy sheikhdoms, the

‘tribe’ is not only an ancient social unit of solidarity but also a powerful political institution. Throughout history, sedentary tribes of the Northern highlands had a major role in shaping the political life in Yemen. These highland areas descend slowly from the mountains toward the desert and are made of rocky plateaus and basins that are interrupted by many peaks. The entire area is on average more than 2,000 meters above sea level. For centuries, this area accommodates the majority of Yemen’s tribal population, who support themselves with family-based farming of millet, maize, coffee, wheat and qat. Some earn their living as carpet weavers or smiths, and, since the 1980s, an increasing number work as tradesmen. According to the World Bank, approximately 75 per cent of land in the northern highland is owner-occupied, and another 11 per cent is owned and operated by absentee landlords (World Bank Report, 1993). Despite the rapid socio-economic changes brought by migration of tribesmen to Yemen’s neighboring oil monarchies and to the towns and cities of the country, and despite the construction of roads, which made Toyota trucks replace camels and mules, and radio, satellite television transmission and mobile phones, Yemen’s tribal structure and tribalism remain evident.

The Yemeni tribal structure is divided into sections, sub-sections and sub-subsections. The levels of segmentation in this structure are often labelled ‘fifths’, ‘fourths’, ‘eights’ and the like. Numerically and spatially, depending on ecological conditions, a sub-section may include ten to twenty villages that are spread out over twenty to twenty five square kilometers. The tribe, or *qabila*, is made up of four to six sections and may number thirty to forty thousand members. While genealogy counts, it is, however, less important than the existence of a territorial-based interlaced web. Tribal identity in Yemen is not only genealogical but also territorial (Peterson, 2008).

The significance of the tribes that occupy the highlands of Yemen lies not in their number or being corporate entities. Instead, it lies in their political potential for mobilization

and organizing group action (Swagman, 1988; Dresch, 1984). The political influence of particular tribal sheikhs, on the other hand, is subject to rise and fall without "changes in the tribes' formal structure and without major changes in group alignments" (Dresch, 1989).

Tribalism in Yemen, even among those who have been detribalized into peasantry and urbanism, is a fundamental reference point that defines perceptions and world-views for the majority of Yemeni people and it is one of the main features in the political structure and decision-making process at a national level. For example, the President of the country proudly admits that the Yemeni state "is a part of the tribes". He goes further to explain that Yemeni people are a collection of tribes, and Yemen's towns and countryside are all tribes. All the official and popular apparatus of the state, he adds, "are formed from the tribes and tribesmen"[48]. Such a presidential statement is not only a strong political assertion of tribal political culture but also an indication of how the balance of power between the state and tribe in Yemen tips strongly toward the latter. A Yemeni scholar reflects on this tipping in favour of 'tribe' and notes that in Yemen the 'tribe' has become not only a very powerful political entity but also the most important mediating national institution, which carries out activities and functions that are close to those of political parties and interest groups (Al Dahari, 1996). Remarkably, more than four and half decades after the establishment of a republican system in Yemen, the state continues to behave like a 'tribe' and the 'tribe' continues to behave like a state. This prominent political role of the 'tribe' in shaping the modern socio-political life in Yemen is, indeed, a very unique formula in the Middle East laboratory of state-society relations.

Unlike the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, the Sheikh of all Sheikhs in Yemen is not the political ruler. Since the September revolution and until his death, the Sheikh of all Sheikhs in Yemen has been Abdullah ibn Al-Ahmar, the leader of Hashid tribal confederation. Going through the Website of Yemen's Sheikh of all Sheikhs @ www.alahmar.net , one is left with

the impression that in the ROY it is difficult to measure the balance of power between the 'tribe', state and political parties. The Sheikhs of all Sheikhs is at the same time the head of *Majlis al Nowab,* (the parliament)[49] and the Chairman of *Al-Islah,* reform party - the strongest opposition party in Yemen. The combination of these three functions in the person of al-Ahmar is indeed a good reflection of the Yemeni politics of the unfamiliar. As an example of Sheikh Al-Ahmar's power, observers of Yemen often refer to the events of 1992, when Al-Ahmar ordered tens of thousands of armed tribesmen from Hashid confederation to encircle Sana'a as a show of power at a time of political crisis. These armed tribesmen camped for about a month on Sana'a's outskirts (Day, 2002).

Another illustrative example of Al Ahmar's political power is his *da'aei al qabilah,* tribal call or summon, to tribal leaders in Sa'ada province asking them to be involved in ending the years-long fighting between the armed forces and Al Huthi militant group[50]. On the 13th of May 2007, his call was published in all Yemeni newspapers and media, including the armed forces magazine. Interestingly, the media reported the tribal call starting with the statement "in response to the request of President Ali Abdullah Salih to Sheikh Al Ahmar to interfere in resolving the armed conflict in Sa'ada, the Sheikh issued a tribal call to the sheikhs of Sahar, Juma'a, Khawlan Bani Amer, Munabeh, Razeh, Ghamr, Shada, and other. In his call, Sheikh Al Ahmar stated the following: "My brothers, tribal leaders of Sa'ada, what is taking place in your countries is damaging to you and us…"

Sheikh Al Ahmar's use of the term your countries *'bilaadikum'* leaves us wondering: Is Yemen a country or countries, and who is ruling unified Yemen- the political system or the tribal institution? To pose this question four decades after the anti-theocracy and anti-feudalism revolutions in the two Yemens, and after a history of almost two decades of party pluralism, indicates the failure of the Yemeni state to penetrate the 'tribe', and the success of tribal penetration of the state. Why is this, and how can we explain the PPM in unified Yemen under

such a strong tribal contextual determinant. In the following section, I attempt to answer the question by situating state-tribe relations in pre and post-revolutionary Yemen.

4. 3.1 Tribes and the State in pre-Revolutionary Yemen

In her work on law and order in Yemeni tribes in *Jabal Razih*[51], anthropologist Shelagh Weier (2007) demonstrates that contrary to the popular western image of Arab tribes as lawless and violent, Yemeni tribes have stable structures of governance and elaborate laws and traditions for maintaining law and order, and for resolving conflicts with the minimum use of physical violence. The tribal political structure has an identical leadership hierarchy, with the Sheikh at the apex, who is treated as *kabir al-qabilah* (the elder or father of the tribe), and if the tribe has a weekly market, the same sheikh is also *kabir al-suq* (the elder or father of the market). The second tier of tribal governance is composed of *a'yan al-qabilah* (notables of the tribe), who are well-off and forceful members chosen from leading clans. Their functions are mainly to deputize for the Sheikh and to represent their clans and wards. Below the notables, a third tier made of *uman'a* (headmen), who represent and manage their hamlets.

Yemeni tribes are divided broadly into two fairly loose confederations: the Hashid and Bakil. Both federations are located in the high plateau of former North Yemen. Although the total number of Yemeni tribes were estimated to number more than two hundred - of which 168 were found in former YAR, and 25 in the former PDRY (Al-Abadi, 2005) - these northern confederations constitute the base of tribal power in Yemen. Three main factors are identified

behind the power of these confederations, particularly the Hashidi one: 1) large followings, 2) located geographically near Sana'a, and 3) sided with the republicans during the civil war. It must be noted here that Hashid and Bakil support to the republicans was not ideologically based. In other words, it was not a support to republican ideas and the establishment of a modern non-theocratic state system. Instead, their siding with the republicans was the consequence of Imam's Ahmed disputes with Bayat al-Ahmar in Hashid and Bayat Abu Ra's in Bakil. In the disputes, the Imam executed Sheikh Nasir Al-Ahmar and his son, from Hashid, and a number of Abu Ra'as sheikhs. According to Peterson (2008), the opposition of the sheikhs of Al-Ahmar sub-section in Hashid, and Abu Ra'as in Bakil to Imam Ahmed 'cost them considerable standing within their tribes'.

The paramount sheikh of the Hashid, the sheikh of the sheikhs, has traditionally been elected from the al-Ahmar family, while Bakil have never had a sheikh of sheikhs. During the imamate, the two confederations were known as the military wings of the Imams, in reference to the military services they have often provided to enforce the rule of the Imams. For centuries, the Imams used the Zaydi mountain tribesmen in their endless wars of defence against the Abbasids, Fatimids, Ayyubis, Mamelukes, Ottomans, Ibn Saud, and in their wars of expansion after the withdrawal of Turkish troops. The relations between the tribal sheikhs and the Imams, however, were tense and not stable, ranging from tribal allegiance in return for exempting the sheikhs from paying taxes and granting them the freedom to practice their own tribal law instead of the Sayyids imposed Islamic law, to forcing them to hand over their sons to the Imam, as hostages in private prisons in Sana'a, to be killed if the sheikhs rebel against the Imam (Abu-Ghanim, 1985). In some occasions, the Imam executed tribal sheikhs for challenging him. Al-Moutawakel (2007), on the other hand, notes that tribal sheikhs did not always wait for the Imam's call to join his forces in wars. On many occasions, and for economic rather than political or ideological motives, tribal sheikhs made use of the Zaydi

principal of disobedience to the Imam and stood behind a new sayyiad candidate for the Imamate. However, despite the contractual relation between hereditary shaykhs and their tribesmen, tribes in Yemen should be seen as "politics created, maintained or changed by people acting, individually or collectively, in their own interests" (Weir, 2007). Through their sheikhs and elders, Yemeni tribes have traditionally managed their own affairs with minimal interference from central authority. Ethical codes and mechanisms of conflict resolutions, for instance, are made of a combination of *urf,* tribal law, *shari'ah,* Islamic law, and *qabaliyah,* tribalism.

In contrast to the tribal sheikhs, there is in some parts of Yemen, mainly in Ibb and Tehama, a different kind of sheikh, known as Mashayekh al A'rd, Sheikh of the land. Their influence does not stem from religious or tribal base, rather from a semi-feudal relation. These sheikhs are members of influential families who own more than 70% of the agricultural lands in the places mentioned above, and have, for centuries, confiscated the role of leadership in these areas (Al-Oudi, 2007). Because they lacked tribal solidarity and tribal fighting skills and organization, Mashayekh al A'rd and their people were easily conquered and exploited by the Imams. In short, because of their fame as arms-bearing aristocracy, and the weakness of the Imamates army, tribal sheikhs were a significant power in the Kingdom of the Imams.

Tribes in pre-revolutionary south of Yemen, on the other hand, had a different nature. They were smaller in number and also far less cohesive. Historically, these tribes never experienced a federation or regional-based structure. During the British occupation of Aden, the colonial administration identified nine tribes, and called them 'cantons'. These were the Abdali, Aqrabi, Alawi, Amiri, Awlaqi, Faḍli, Ḥawshabi, Ṣubayḥi and Y'afi. Through the eyes of the British administrators, all other existing forms of association in the hinterland should be a part of this British dominant classificatory grid of administrative units (Willis, 2004). People in the hinterland, however, rarely conformed neatly to the categories under which they were grouped,

and in many instances the use of the terms ‘tribe’ or ‘tribal chief’ obscured the socio-political realities it was intended to illuminate (Gavin 1975, 201). Ironically, the colonial administration in Aden has created administrative units on the basis of ‘tribes’ that have no geographical, social or political existence. Amiri tribe, for instance, is a pure British creation. The British have also created local leaders in the hinterland. The reliance on these leaders resulted in complicating and worsening of the British-tribes relations, since these leaders were often less capable of ensuring stability than had been assumed. Furthermore, some rival local leaders made alliances with the Ottomans or with the Imam against the British. In short, the colonially constructed patchwork system of tribal-sultanic control and minimal British supervision has contributed in turning the tribes in the south of Yemen into non-cohesive fragmented units with unstable leaderships (Wedeen, 2008). This British design was not accepted by all tribes outside Aden Protectorate (particularly in the Radfan mountainous region) and in the eastern regions. Between 1919 and 1949, the British Royal Air Force was put in action against the Subayhi, Mansuri and Qutabi tribes on at least five occasions each (Peterson, 1986). In the 1960s, the presence of Egyptian troops in the YAR was at the heart of the British motives behind the founding of the Federation of Southern Arabia (FSA). The FSA was formed on the 4th of April 1962, and it was composed of the 15 protected states of the Federation of Arab Emirates of the South. This was, however, not enough to quell the aspiration of the local population to gain independence, nor to solve the differences between the people in the Aden area and tribes in the rest of south Yemen. On the 18th of January 1963, the FSA was merged with the crown colony of Aden.

4. 3.2 The Tribe and the State in post Revolutionary Yemen

In the YAR, unlike the cases of Libya and Iraq, the republican forces that led the political change possessed neither a revolutionary national project capable of mobilizing the

masses nor a popular base to count on for supporting and defending change. For mobilization purposes, therefore, the Yemeni republic had to rely mainly on the influence and power of tribal sheikhs of the two main tribal confederations of Hashid and Bakil. However, it is the Hashid confederation that is often seen as the most dominant tribal grouping of the Yemeni state. This is due to the ability of the Hashid confederation to establish and lead political and social coalitions. Such ability is demonstrated by its capacity to call prompt gatherings and gain a swift, loyal response and support to leadership demands. Hashid-organized tribal conferences are illustrative here. The Bakil confederation, on the other hand, is located primarily in the northeast of the country. Although it's the largest tribe in terms of size, it has a less political influence and weight. This is attributed, mainly, to the fact that internal divisions within their tribal leadership and an inability to gain any unifying loyalty often plague the Bakil. Another reason is related to the nature of Yemeni tribal coalitions and allegiances, which are often dispersed throughout many areas in the country. Although the power base of the Hashid is located in the northwest of the country, there are however many smaller tribes who have pledged allegiance to Hashid, with the Bakil occupying the areas in between. In other words, there are no territorial considerations in allegiances. In exchange for protection and other benefits, smaller tribes promise larger tribes loyalty in times of conflict, whether in war or politics. Anthropologists of Yemen observe that despite the contractual relation between hereditary sheikhs and their tribesmen, the northern tribes in Yemen are "politics created, maintained or changed by people acting, individually or collectively, in their own interests" (Weir, 2007). They also note that the political reality in Yemen affirms that it's not the size of the tribe that determines its political influence. Rather its degree of mobilization and its capacity to penetrate the state. Generally speaking, the political position of tribal leaders in north Yemen has been strengthened, as discussed in Chapter Three, by the financial and military support of Saudi Arabia and Egypt to Yemeni tribes during the first civil war. The

latter has shown that military and political outcomes of wars in Yemen are determined by the ebb and flow of the shifting tribal allegiances.

Following the toppling of President Abdullah Al Salaal in the aftermath of the 1967 withdrawal of Egyptian troops, tribal infiltration of state institutions began to expand and reached its peak during Al Eryani's regime (1967-74). Regime after regime in the ARY did what the Imams did -rallying tribes. In other words, Yemenis have succeeded in getting rid of the Imam but not of the Imam's mentality. From the first day of its birth, tribes heavily influenced state institutions in the YAR, and the survival of the republican regimes continued to depend on tribal support. The revolution, according to Abdul Karim Saif (2000), brought about the incorporation of tribal leaders in the state apparatus and has created a new tribal-commercial elite. In addition, the revolution did not replace the Zaydi Imamate by a consensual republic. Instead, it has revived the endemic regional and tribal divisions. The outcome is that the North Yemeni state has not acquired legitimacy based on a national developmental or structural basis, and the North Yemeni society took a 'transitional character'.

In the PDRY, on the other hand, tribes have been historically weakened because of the following three reasons: 1) the transformation of society from tribalism to feudalism, 2) the exposure of the tribes in the south to the various modernizing forces that existed in Aden colony, 3) the policies adopted by socialist PDRY in dealing with tribes. For the most part, the socialist leaders of the south adopted a policy of exclusion, purging, and transformation of tribes (Al Faqih, 2007). Clearly, the Marxist regime was extremely resilient to any tribal ideology and has worked ruthlessly to elude tribalism, by disarming the tribal population, restricting the influence of tribal sheikhs, expanding the state managed education system and enforcing a national legal system (Al Asrar, 2006). Already during the anti-colonial struggle in the mid-1960s, a large number of sheikhs and sultans fled the country. Those who did not flee were killed, at the hands of the NLF and FLOSY fighters. Most of the sheikhs who fled took

refuge in Saudi Arabia, where they lived comfortably in Jeddah. The PDRY leaders thought that they, armed with the teachings of "scientific socialism", and monopoly of the use of violence, could easily crush tribalism. Paradoxically, in the political disputes and power struggles among the socialist elite, which shaped the short history of the PDRY, geographical and tribal ties were activated at times of armed conflicts. The 1986 dramatic events in Aden stand witness to the tribal and home-origin mobilization strategies of President Ali Nasser and his opponents.

With this view of state-tribe relations in the two former republics in Yemen, what was the impact of such relations on shaping the Yemeni PPM? Fred Halliday (2007) cites a conversation that took place in 1972 between the PDRY president, Salem Robea Ali, and the northern president, Abd al-Rahman al-Iryani, which I consider very illustrative of the different socio-political settings that created the different paths of the PPM in the two Yemens. In the conversation, Robea Ali said he would agree to unity with the north if the latter complied with two conditions: liquidation of the bureaucracy and of the bourgeoisie. To this the northern president replied: "I agree. But first you have to give me a bureaucracy and also give me a bourgeoisie. Once I have them, I can then discuss getting rid of them again". Indeed, it's the social infrastructure and the ways it developed that made the distinction between the role of 'tribe' in shaping the PPM in the north and south Yemens.

In the PDRY, political control of social development prevented the emergence of bourgeoisie, and the elite were in favor of supporting the working class, and getting rid of tribal and religious sheikhs. The opposite took place in the YAR where the regimes (except that of Al-Hamdi) obstructed the natural growth of modern forces in the favour of traditional tribal ones. These two different modes of governance created two different forms of citizenship - a civil in the YAR, and a social in the PDRY. The latter put emphasis on the rights of education, health, employment, and creating a safety net for protecting Yemenis from poverty, while the

former gave more space for expression, travel and economic activities. As a result, the PPM in the PDRY was shaped by the elite support to working class, and in the YAR by the elite reliance on the two sheikhs - the tribal and religious.

4.3.3 State- Tribe Relations in Post Unified Yemen: The Tribal Conferences

During the transition period (1990-93) that followed the announcement of the fusion of the YAR and PDRY, a sort of balance in the relations between the state and 'tribe' was created. This is due to the entry of the YSP and other political forces into Yemen's political arena, which created an environment of pluralism. In the post 1994 civil war, however, such a balance was altered in the favour of 'tribe'. The years of balance in the relations turned out to be nothing but an elites-orchestrated project, and an illusionary projection of state power resulting from the euphoria of Yemen's unification. The victory of the YAR regime in the civil war was indeed a victory for the two sheikhs of north Yemen, the tribal and religious ones. The victory resulted in turning the political arena of united Yemen into an arena that is more conservative and occupied by tribal forces, who control not only the executive, legislative and administrative arms of the state, but also dominate the military and security apparatus and economic activities. Such domination is Salih's reward for his valuable assistance, which the two sheikhs provided in the post unity period, and during the North-South civil war. The memoirs of the late Sheikh Al-Ahmar are illustrative of how Salih manipulated the two sheikhs in order to undermine his socialist partners in the unification project.

In his important autobiographical writing, sheikh Al-Ahmar makes the following remark: During the first days in the life of post unified Yemen, Salih asked me, and asked other allied tribal sheikhs and Islamic forces to oppose the agreements that he signed with the

Socialists in the South “in order to prevent the implementation of these agreements”. Al-Ahmar further notes that Salih asked tribal and Islamic forces to establish a political party that functioned in a parallel way with the ruling GPC. Al-Ahmar recalls a talk he had with Salih, during which Salih said: ‘when you establish a powerful and organized political party, we shall coordinate with you, and you shall adopt an oppositional position regarding some issues that I will have to agree about them with the YSP’. On this basis, Al-Ahmar continues, we have founded the Islah Party (Al-Ahmar, 2007). Such a historical testimony by the most prominent tribal figure in the modern political history of Yemen illustrates not only the 'informality' in Yemen's political life, but also how Arab regimes can perceive Islamist parties as rational political partners. Worth noting that the Islah is one of the most ideologically and socially diversified Islamist parties in the Arab Middle East. Under its banner, the Islah party shelters Salafists, Muslim Brothers and Zaydi tribal leaders.

The state-led manipulation and shifting of alliances and rewards resulted in turning state agencies in unified Yemen into zones of competition among centres of power within the state, ‘tribe’and political parties. In unified Yemen, it looks as if the ancient tribal conflicts and disputes over water resources and grazing rights have turned into conflicts and competition over state resources. It must be noted, however, that even the elites in former South Yemen played the political card, although not as effectively and excessively as the northern elites. For instance, the YSP attempted to gain the support of the Bakil confederation by playing the two cards of the historical rivalry between Hashid and Bakil, and the political marginalization of the Bakil.

In what follows, I address two features, which I use as a good mirror of state-tribe relations in united Yemen: Tribal Conferences, and the conflict in Saada.

4.3.3.1 Tribal Conferences

In united Yemen, tribes use a number of mechanisms that allow them to participate in shaping Yemen's socio-political life. One of these mechanisms is organizing tribal conferences, which are held not only for the sake of expressing the needs of tribes but also for practicing their right to perform political activities, act as a pressure group, and publicly declare their position regarding political, economic and social developments in the country. These conferences are organized by tribal councils that were established following the unification of the north and south of Yemen. The first major inter-tribal conference was held in October 1990, under the title 'Conference of Solidarity with Yemeni Tribes'. The second was held in December 1991, and was called the 'Conference for National Cohesion'. The third, was held in June 1992, and was known as 'Sab'a Conference of Yemeni Tribes'. These gatherings were attended by tens of thousands of tribesmen who reaffirmed and awoke tribal affiliations within the new post unification climate of party pluralism. For example, in an interview with one of the organizers of Sab'a Conference, Sheikh bin Meeli[52] stated that the conference was organized on behalf of all tribes of Yemen, who are linked with each other on the basis of 'religious and brotherhood affiliations'. In 1994, following the recommendations of these conferences, a body called 'the Supreme Council of Yemen's Tribes' was established to co-ordinate and organize political and social activities of the tribes. A number of intra-tribal conferences were also held, for instance, United Bakil Tribes Conference (UBTC) in the summer of 1994. The main objective of the UBTC was the re-organization and re-activation of Bakil tribes so that they can gain their due political weight in the post unity climate, which is dominated by Hashid tribal confederation. In addition to stressing their strong Yemeni national

identity, participants in these conferences often highlight the importance of tribalism as antidote against what they perceive as political party-created factionalism. The declarations of these conferences put emphasis on demanding administrative and political reforms, and demanding the preservation and protection of *urf* (tribal law). However, matters such as the political and economic consequences of the Gulf War were also discussed. In light of the wide-ranging nature of these conferences, Dresch (1995) argues that the broader concerns expressed by the organizers and participants of these conferences make them not narrow attempts at preserving a tribal past but as part of a civil society action. These conferences have shown, above all, the ability of Yemeni tribes to act collectively. Taken into consideration that Yemeni tribes are armed to the teeth, such politically motivated gatherings are strong messages to the central government in Sana'a.

Clearly, there is a connection between the organizing of these conferences and the declaration of the 1991 law on political parties, which endorsed party pluralism. Tribes and their leaders perceived the flourishing of political parties as a threat to their centuries-old political role. Tribal conferences and councils mirror, therefore, the search of Yemeni tribes and their leaders for an effective mechanism or tool to protect tribal identity and structure from the winds of the new climate of partisan activities. Furthermore, in the first few years of united Yemen, the central government grew more powerful, which made the tribes realize the importance of entering the political arena in order to maintain their centuries-old influence. In an interview I conducted in Sana'a, Al Faqeeh (2007) argued that Yemeni tribes "had no other choice but to join the government, even if it meant sacrificing important traditions and values". For the politically marginalized tribes, on the other hand, such conferences and councils were opportunities for drawing the attention of the ruling elites. Some authors, for instance, Al-Zahri (1996), notes that the founding of the post-conference tribal councils was encouraged and supported by the political parties, particularly the GPC and YSP. Al-Zahri

makes his argument on the basis of the media coverage of these conferences, with pro-GPC and YSP newspapers providing positive coverage of particular conferences, and negative ones regarding other tribal conferences and councils. Following the 2007 Hashid conference held on November 18th, a new tribal body was formed - the National Solidarity Council - which was a coalition of tribes and sheikhs that express commitment to using civil society instruments to bring change in Yemen's socio-economic and political life. This body is a product of the tribal conferences and should be seen under the light of a new attempt of incorporating 'tribe' with civil society vs. the state. The November 18th conference was held in Amran, 50 km northwest of the capital, named the 'Broader Meeting for Hashid Tribesmen', and was attended by more than ten thousand people. During the conference, the Sheikh of Hashid made the following remarks, which reflect the hybrid tribal political perceptions: this conference is "a new peaceful revolution to reform the situation and infringements, which are symptomatic of poor government policies…if we want to continue the march toward a modern and strong Yemen, the Yemeni people must understand that the country's problems will never be solved without a nationwide struggle… We are not intent on destruction. We want to provide a typical example for people on how to behave and claim their rights, as our habits and traditions oblige us to stand for justice, equality and loyalty, and support those who suffer from injustice and oppression" (Al-Ahmar, in Bin Salem, 2007).

4.3.3.2 The Tribal Factor in Saada Conflict

In dealing with the violent revolt in Saada province, which erupted in 2004 under the leadership of sheikh al-Houti, the Zaydi religious leader who headed the militant group of the Believing Youth, and who is accused by the Yemeni government of trying to set himself up as the Zaydi Imam of Yemen, Salih's regime thought it would be best to fight the rebels with the help of a tribal coalition. Over the past five years, Sana'a has recruited thousands of northern

tribesmen, including radical Sunni Salafis to fight al-Huthi followers. In July 2008, for instance, Sheikh Hussein Al-Ahmar announced the establishment of a 'Popular Army' made of nine thousand Hashid tribesmen, charged with fighting Al-Houti groups in Bani Hashish and Harf Soufeyan areas. According to many observers of the conflict, these anti-al-Houti tribal recruits have provided effective support to government troops. By manipulating the traditional rivalry between Hashid tribes and a number of tribes in Saada, Salih's regime there have been attempts to turn the conflict from being purely political into a tribal issue. In this sense, the regime plays the tribal card for survival. The regime also plays the tribal card in ceasefires and mediation attempts to end the conflict. On 23 June 2005, for instance, Abdullah Razami, the military leader of the Believing Youth, surrendered after tribal mediators worked out a deal with the government. The terms of the deal were said to include a cessation of hostilities in return for amnesty for members of the organization. It is worth noting here that the government made similar tribal based deals with radical Jihadists affiliated with Al Qaeda.

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing discussion has illustrated that the essential starting point in studying the process of political modernization in tribal Arab republics should be the appreciation of the tensions inherent to nation building and state formation in artificially and newly established states that govern ancient tribal-based old societies. Geertz's classic formulation of 'old society-new state' is very useful, therefore, in understanding the role of the tribal factor in shaping political modernization in Arab tribal republics. On the basis of Geertz's formulation, loyalties and solidarity in an ancient tribal society such as Yemen rest with the collectives rather than with national institutions. Yemen is in fact one of the only four countries in the world - along with Egypt, Persia and China - that can "legitimately claim three millennia of more or less continuous culture" (Halliday, 2007). In such an ancient society that is governed by a newly established modern state system there is an obvious tense relationship between tribal identity and national identity, mainly because each of the two identities requires loyalties of its members, each represents alternative institutions of power and social control and each involves exclusive definitions of what the maximal political unit ought to be.

The analysis of the PPM in Arab republics with large tribal populations should be carried out, therefore, in the light of the fact that tribalism is an alternative structure that is more available to societies that are recently incorporated into the western dominated world economy, politics and culture. The case of Yemen illustrates that the degree of social segmentation versus state bureaucratization in post colonial Arab countries with significant tribal population depends on the following factors: 1) the strength of tribal groups prior to colonization; 2) the form of colonial rule, and 3) the characteristics and strategies of the post independence national state that has emerged from a nationalist struggle (Charrad, 2001). In the case of a united Yemen, the modern political institutions, such as parties and civil society organizations failed in competing with, restricting the role of or replacing the tribe. Indeed, the Yemeni tribe is

more effective and deeply rooted in the society, which means that the modern political institutions must take that into account and develop a mechanism for integrating the tribe into its political and social programs. It's worth noticing that the Yemeni tribe did not reject the idea of political modernization, it took and is still taking part in setting up modern civil society institutions. Some recent Yemeni studies assert that the tribe's existence and its fulfilment of certain NGO duties and functions is far better than having an official authority that monopolizes NGO as well as state duties and functions. The following lessons can be learned from state-tribe relations in Yemen. First, political tribalism in the Arab Middle East is the outcome of the fact that state and 'tribe' have been articulating with each other under a complex and multifaceted external/internal context. Second, tribal confederations determined the political fate of Yemen's regimes. Third, tribalism makes sense from the perspective of socio-cultural affiliations because it's an extensive web of kin-based relations constituting an important safety net and an identity network providing economical, emotional and psychological shelters. Additionally, it binds its members through relations of solidarity and mutual trust. For these reasons, tribalism shouldn't be completely discouraged from playing an important role in societies that are governed by weak and poor states. Fourth, the experiences of tribes in the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen were similar to those of tribes in the Central Asian republics during the Soviet era. In both cases, despite harshly imposed regime-orchestrated social reforms, tribal socio-cultural institutions have managed to survive and retain their value systems. Fifth, a weak/fragile government in a decentralized tribal society is not necessarily a failing state. The Yemeni case demonstrates how the ruling elite succeeded in playing tribal politics while slowly strengthening the coercive power of the central government. Since the northern victory in the 1994 civil war, Salih's regime has been promoting a deliberate policy of re-vitalization of tribalism in former south Yemen, mainly by appointing southern tribal sheikhs in government structure and revitalizing tribal law and

customs in areas that were controlled by the YSP. During the last five years, many disputes in the south have been resolved through tribal legal code. Adopting such a policy is indeed a very strong indicator of the relevance of the tribal system and tribalism to politics of survival in Salih's regime. Sixth, tribalism in united Yemen isn't represented by activists defending tribal values, but rather by a group of politically influential individuals playing the tribal card in politics. The main objective of their game isn't promoting their tribesmen's socio-economic interests, but rather the personal acquiring of ever-larger shares of the shrinking Yemeni national cake. Most of the influential tribal leaders have transformed from being representative sheikhs to government insiders residing in Sana'a, where their financial and political interests are concentrated. It is tribal elitism – not tribes and tribalism – that should be blamed for distorting the picture of state-society relations in united Yemen. These tribal elites act as a 'Veto Group', which is, according to Riesman (2001), a group that is able to prevent the exercise of power by the state, block the implementation of decisions and keep debates open. It must be restated here that the roots of this tribal elite's attitude are structural and not personal in nature. Among others, these structural roots include the geopolitics of the Arabian Peninsula, the failure of united Yemen's Constitution to become a national consensual document able to domesticate citizens' traditional loyalties to the unified Yemeni nation-state and the credibility gap of both the government and political parties. Such a gap results from the seasonal evoking and provoking of national aspirations towards democracy and development without providing concrete solutions or fulfilling promises. Current inter-clan relations within the political cadres of united Yemen and the unstable balance between public institutions and tribal tendencies are causing – and will continue to cause – further disturbance of the state building process and the deepening of the growing mistrust of state institutions by a large segment of society. Finally, the 'tribe' in weak Arab states is not necessarily a contradiction or an alternative to the state; it

is rather a tributary to its functions and a deterrent to state hegemony or authoritarian practices of political rulers.

CHAPTER 5

Political Parties in the Corner of Arabia: Evolution, Frameworks and Dynamics

INTRODUCTION

Political parties are institutional expressions of individual and group interests. They involve citizens in public life (Simon, 2003), disseminate political information, widen the collective political consciousness (Hinnebusch, 2006), join people who hold similar political views together and shape their attitudes toward their governments (Apter, 1965). They also act as a tool for nation building (Burnell, 2004), create and recruit politicians and provide them with the grounds for leadership (Macridis, 1967). In light of this, they, more than the bureaucracy and army, have the most immediate impact on developing nations.

Not surprisingly, the literature on the process of political modernization (PMM) emphasizes the significant contribution of parties and in that context their vital role in political socialization, and in organizing and institutionalizing political mobilization and participation. Parties in such a literature are even elevated to the extent of being the single most important key to the PPM. At the heart of such an elevation lies the assumption that political parties are causes and symbols of the PPM. As a symbol, parties show that there are choices in society and different scenarios for imagining and shaping state-society relations. As a cause, on the other hand, they "push at the limits of accepted activity" and broaden "the popular conception of their capabilities" (Shevtsova, 1993, Varnum, 1994).

This chapter seeks to increase the knowledge about political parties' development in Yemen, the least developed and most tribal Arab country. It is hoped that the chapter will inform scholarly and policy debates on democratic practices in tribal Middle Eastern societies, and on the importance of thinking contextually about the PPM in the region. The chapter attempts to illustrate how party activism and partisan

pluralism in the region do not spring up from within a vacuum, and are not shaped by cultural values. Rather, they emerge within particular regional and international political contexts and they are shaped by elite strategies and the scope of political freedoms. The main objectives of the chapter, therefore, are:

1. Increase the understanding of political parties' formation in tribal Arab republics.
2. Contribute to the debate on the emergence of political parties as a tool for democratization in Arab countries.
3. Refute the cultural explanation by identifying factors -- internal and external – that contribute to the flourishing and institutionalization of party activism.
4. Contribute to the understanding of the emerging Islamist parties and cross-ideological party cooperation in the region.

To achieve its objectives, the chapter concerns itself with first exploring, briefly, the state of political parties in the Arab Middle East. Second, in order to understand the current situation of political parties in Yemen and the role they play in the PPM, the chapter traces the prevailing domestic, regional and international conditions under which their birth and evolution took place. Third, the chapter describes the new constitutional and legal foundations of party pluralism in unified Yemen. Fourth, an effort is made to draw an ideological map of Yemen's political parties and to describe and analyze the environment and results of the elections that took place since the unification. The chapter ends by shedding light on the unique phenomena of cross-ideological party's alliances in Yemen, with a focus on the Islamist-Left alliances.

5.1 Political Parties in the Arab Middle East: A Brief Discussion

Political parties (*Al-Ahzab Al Siyassiyah*[53]) are excellent mirrors of the diversity of political ideologies in the Arab Middle East. Their active existence, marginalization and illegalization can serve as an indicator of the degree of opening and closure of Arab political systems. They also provide a very useful tool for studying a wide range of important modernization- related issues in the region such as societal tradition, societal change, political culture and state formation (Hinnebusch, 2005). Despite their significance, however, their role in modernizing the socio-political life in the Arab Middle East was overlooked in the scholarly literature on the region[54]. Some authors attribute this overlooking to the so-called Middle East 'deficit of the party competition', which is the outcome of the presence of a large number of "no-party, one party or dominant party states"(Hinnebusch, 2005). Another possible reason could be the post Cold War dominant perception of Western aid donors and policymakers that civil society organizations, particularly NGOs, not parties, are the panacea for virtually all problems of governance in the Arab Middle East[55].

A glance at partisan-based political participation in the Arab world reveals that such participation has been determined by three main state-policies: exclusion and restrictions, banning in the name of tradition and controlled allowing of party pluralism. With this in mind, we can draw the following map of party activism in the region:

1- States that allow parties to operate: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon and Yemen. In most of these countries, the political gate for partisan work is opened on the condition that such work does not limit the authority of the ruler or the privileges of the ruling clique.

2- States with a one party system that allows only the candidates who are vetted by the ruling party to run for office: Syria and Saddam's Iraq.

3- States that reject partisan work and thus have no parties: the monarchies and sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf. To this list, one can add Libya since it applies political participation not via parties but through the so-called popular conferences only. The combination of tribalism and oil rentierism is the most likely explanation behind this special feature of no-party politics.

It must be noted here that the above-mentioned three categories are not watertight. Tunisia, for instance, allows a multiparty system to operate, but forbids all religiously affiliated parties. Egypt, on the other hand, bans Islamist parties, but allows members of the Muslim Brotherhood to run for elections as independents. In Kuwait, all partisan activities are illegal, but candidates compete in elections with the backing of the so-called political societies (Ahmoud, 2007).

While political parties in the region differ widely in terms of their ideological packages and goals, most of them, however, share the dilemma of operating under political and military stresses. Ironically, such stresses have increased following the departure of European colonial troops from the region. In the post independent Arab state, national forces and parties that were once in the same trench came into conflict with each other regarding the path of modernization which the post colonial Arab state should follow. The clash has resulted in creating deep inter and intra-party divisions, which were for the benefit of the post independence regimes. The latter were able through their monopoly over resources and coercion to impose their logic and ideology.

As a result, opposition movements and parties in much of the Arab world found themselves dealing with indigenous governments that do not allow them to operate in the same way they did during the colonization period. This early hostility of Arab regimes towards political parties can be explained through a number of prisms: the antipathy to Western imperialism, including its institutions, the post independence cultural nationalism, the colonially inherited ethnic tension, the military mind-set of regimes, Cold War politics and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Worth mentioning here is the fact that Arab political parties were instrumental in leading the anti-colonial struggle- e.g. the NLF in Algeria, Wafd in Egypt, Dustur and Neo-Dustur in Tunisia, Istiqlal in Morocco, NLF in South Yemen.

The post independence narrowing of the political space and the state-orchestrated accusation of political parties of sowing divisions (of being fifth columns for outside powers) and of polluting Arab minds and hearts (Bal Qaziz, 2001), left Arab parties with three choices: renewal imprisonment, resignation from political thinking, or surrendering to the will and advice of the regimes. The outcome of this unfortunate situation was the establishment and consolidation of unitary political institutions, "whose function was no more than the mobilization of the masses" (Dawisha, 2003). Clearly, it's not the Arab cultural environment that hampered the emergence of effective post independence political parties. Rather, the repressive political conditions imposed by Arab regimes (Abukhalil, 1997).

During the last two decades, however, many Arab regimes, under external and domestic pressures, were forced to re-activate political party work. For the purpose of projecting a desirable image to the outside world, with minimal internal political

concessions, Arab regimes adopted the following two approaches: First, supporting the emergence of new parties[56], mostly illusionary ones that are either one- man parties with almost no existence in the political street, e.g. *Hizb al-Umma* in Egypt, or carbon copy Western parties such as environment-focused parties, e.g. *Hizb al-Khodr* (Green Party). Ironically, the latter was established in one of the least green regions in the world (Hanafi, 2006).

The second technique is sowing the seeds of inter and intra parties divisions and disputes. Today's numerous offshoots from mother parties in the region illustrate the success of this approach. I should conclude this brief discussion by noting that a number of successful Arab parties with strong organizational structures and massive popular support have recently emerged in the region, e.g. Hamas, Hezbollah and the Muslim Brothers. However, despite their wide domestic constituencies, these parties were deprived of external recognition and legitimacy because of their opposition to the US geopolitical agenda in the region. Thus, external legitimacy has become one more useful tool in the hands of Arab regimes in suppressing popular domestic parties.

5. 2 The Birth and Evolution of Parties in Yemen: A Histo-Political Framework

History of political party activism in Yemen is connected with the struggle against the dictatorial theocracy in the North, and the exploiting British colonialism in the South. For descriptive and analytical purposes, I trace the evolution of Yemeni political parties in three historical periods: pre revolution and independence, post revolution and independence, and in the aftermath of unification. The analysis will reveal how, despite the geographical isolation, poverty, social conservatism and political marginalization of Yemen, such an evolution took place under the impact of a broader, regional and international context.

5. 2.1 Pre 1962 Revolution and 1967 Independence: Aden and Students Factors

Political parties of both former North and South Yemen were born in Aden. Being the naval and political base of the British colonial administration in the corner of Arabia, the port of Aden was the only Yemeni city that was equipped with the infrastructure and political climate[57] necessary for the development of political party activism. By the mid 1930s, opposition to the Imam in the north and colonial administration in the south were growing. In the North, such an opposition was articulated in Islamic terms, and focused on reforming the existing system. The main aim of Northern activists at the time was exposing the injustice (*dhulm*) of the taxation system and the deviation of the Imam from the original message of Islam. Due to the total banning of partisan activities, such opposition was channeled via the mosques and semi-organized societies and clubs, e.g. al- *Jameyah al-adabiyah* (1936), *Hi'aat al-Nedaal* (1935), *Jamyat al-Islah* (1944). The Imam reacted with an iron fist to all calls for reforms, pushing the opposition to secrecy and migration to Aden. In 1944, inspired and supported by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the first Northern political party, *Hizb al-Ahrar*[58], was founded in Aden. It is the very same party that orchestrated the failed 1948 coup, known as *harakt al –doustoor*, against the Imam. Later, in 1946, a*l-jamayah al- Yamaniyah al-Kobrah* was established followed by *al-Ithad al-Yamani* in 1951 (Afif, 1982).

The opposition discourse of the emerging 1950s political parties and organizations began to use a mixed secular/religious vocabulary phrased in terms such as the brutal oppression (*Ta'aghout*), falseness (*Zayef*) and political backwardness (*takhaluf siyasi*) of the Imam's system (Al-Mana, 1994). Clearly, the Egyptian

revolution of 1952, the rise of pan Arab nationalism and the ascendancy of the Ba'ath ideology in Iraq and Syria boosted the secular resistance in the corner of Arabia. The Socialist Arab Ba'ath party, for instance, had its first Yemeni branch in 1958, and a year later *Harakat al Qawmiyin al-Arab (HQA)* also had its own base in north Yemen. The HQA was distinguished by having one unified leadership for both the north and south (Al-Mana, 1994), and by being the first political movement in modern Yemen that was capable of establishing popular-based political parties. Like the Islamist opposition, these secular parties operated in secrecy and in the form of groups and cells.

Similarly, South Yemen's political parties were founded as extensions of regional movements and ideologies. Unlike the north, however, Socialism and Marxism inspired parties and movements, e.g. *al-Etehad al-Shaabi al-Democraty* (the Popular Democratic Union), *Hizb al- Shaab al-Ishtraki* (the Socialist Popular Party) have evolved and emerged to become governing parties. Unlike the north, the opposition movement in the South was originally based in the trade union movement (TUM) in Aden. At the heart of the TUM's movement was the rejection of the British plan for a separate South Arabian state, in which the conservative rural elites would play a predominant role (Halliday, 1997). During the period 1963-1967, the opposition launched a guerrilla movement, organized mainly by a Nasserism-inspired movement called the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY) and a more radical "Marxist-Leninist" National Liberation Front (NLF). It was the latter that then came to power in the post independent South Yemen.

In both North and South, most of the founders of parties and movements were returning Yemeni students from Damascus, Cairo and Baghdad. It was their exposure to the secular ideas of Nasserism, Ba'athism and pan Arab nationalism that altered the map of party activism and resistance in Yemen[59], mainly by promoting the idea that the

Yemeni people are part of the greater Arab nation, and are, therefore, committed to Arab unity. Despite the different nature of the political and economic conditions in the North and South, all forms of opposition, however, shared the belief that Yemen is one country, which is wrongly divided by dynastic and colonial oppressors (Halliday, 1997).

5.2.2 The Revolution, Independence and the Legacy of One-Party Systems

The liberation from autocracy and colonization, which the 1962 revolution and 1967 independence brought to the people of Yemen, has created two republican regimes with two opposite political ideologies: tribal capitalism in the North and Socialism in the South. Despite the ocean of difference between the two ideologies, the two regimes adopted a similar policy towards political parties: exclusion from the official national project. The northern revolution, for instance, was silent in its early years on the question of freedom of individuals and groups to establish political parties, it neither allowed nor forbade them. Later, however, in the 1970 constitution of the YAR, article 37 made it clear that partisan work, in all its forms, is prohibited. Such hostile constitutional statements toward parties colored the political perceptions of all north Yemen presidents up until the May 1990 unification. For example, the first northern President, al-Salal was quoted as saying that there was no place in Yemen for political parties[60]. Another president, this time al-Hamdi, accused partisan work of leading to fragmentation and the creation of damaging blocks and conflicts[61]. Ali Salih, on the other hand, declared in 1985 that Yemen rejects partisanism because irrespective of the name parties take or the mask they wear, their work is based on being agents for external forces[62].

With this intolerant attitude toward political parties, successive regimes in the YAR, from 1962-1990, have avoided, in their attempts at creating a representative

national political organization, even the use of the term *Hizb* (party). The first of such organizations was established in Jan.1967, during al-Salal's regime, and it was called *Al-Etehad al-Sha'abi al-Thawri* (the Revolutionary Popular Union, RPU). In Feb.1973, President al-Aryani replaced the RPU with *Al-Etehad al-Yamani* (The Yemeni Union, YU). In October 1975, during al-Hamdi regime the YU was replaced by *Al-Laagnah al-Oolyah lil Tasheeh al-Mali wa al-Edari* (the Supreme Committee for Financial and Administrative Correction, SCFAC). Ali Salih, created the last of such bodies in August 1982, *Al-Mutamar al-Sha'abi al-a'am* (General Popular Congress, GPC). The GPC, as I discuss later in the chapter, was created as an anti-party meeting point for all existing political organizations (Al Shemeeri, 2003). In this sense, the YAR regime of Salih opened the door for political parties and opposition movements that operate outside the state to practice their activism inside the arena of the GPC, but did not allow them constitutionally to operate publicly under the banners of their own parties (Burrowes, 1987).

The regime in the South, on the other hand, did not ban party activity but opposed party pluralism. The seventh article of the 1970 constitution made it clear that "Based on scientific socialism, the National Front leads political action among the masses through mass organizations in order to develop society so that the national revolution can take its non-capitalist path". Later, in 1978, article 3 of the amended constitution declared: "The Yemen Socialist Party, armed with the theory of scientific socialism, is the leader and guide of society and the state, and sets the general scope of the evolution of society and the external and internal political line of the state". While the political and media discourses in the YAR emphasized that political party affiliations are not suitable for the Yemeni socio-cultural and religious values, in the

PDRY such discourses focused on attacking party pluralism as a symbol of capitalist intellectual invasion (Al Zahri, 2004).

A single party system dominated, therefore, the political landscape of Yemen from 1962 to 1990 - the GPC in the north and YSP in the south. Both regimes argued that adopting an anti-pluralism policy is essential for breaking down feudalism, and for bringing order to their fragmented and 'chaotic' societies. The three decades period of state-sponsored culture of banning parties, however, was dominated by political instability in the form of military coups, political assassinations, intra-elite violent clashes and three military confrontations between the two republics: in Sept.1972, Feb.1979, and April 1988. It is important to mention that from the time of their birth, the two republics of Arabia were caught in a regional and international web of conflicting national, regional and international interests, which had a direct impact on the Yemeni ideological and partisan map. For example, Nasser's conflict with the Saudis, Nasser's clash with the Muslim Brothers, the conflict over regional hegemony between Baghdad and Cairo, the ideological conflict between Baghdad and Damascus, and the Cold War between Moscow and Washington. All of these have always defined and redefined not only the relations between the state and political organizations and parties in Yemen but also inter and intra party relations. In this respect, Yemen resembles Lebanon[63].

The restrictions imposed by the YAR and PDRY regimes resulted in stimulating party activities outside the state's arena. In the YAR, such activities took place in three main camps of political thought. First, pan Arabism (*Qawmi*) represented by *Hizb al-Ba'ath al-Arabi al-Eshtraki (the* Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, ASBP). The ASBP became the mother of three movements in Yemen - the Syrian Ba'ath, the Iraqi Ba'ath

and Nasserism. The latter was split into three main groupings. It is worth noting that on the 15th of October 1978, the Nasserists attempted unsuccessfully to overthrow the Northern regime (Al Salahi, 2001). The second camp was the Left (*al-Yassar),* which was comprised of five parties and leftist organizations, united in 1979 under the organizational umbrella of *Hizb al-Weehda al-Sha'abyah* (Popular Unity Party, PUP). These five merging organizations were: the Revolutionary Democratic Party of Yemen, the Popular Vanguard Party in North Yemen, the Organization of Yemeni Revolutionary Resistors, Popular Democratic Union and, finally, the Labor Party. The PUP formed its own military wing[64] called *al-Gabaha al-Wataneyah al-Democrateyah* (National Democratic Front), which launched a decade-long armed struggle against the ruling regime in Sana'a (Mansoor, 2004).

The third major camp was the Islamist one, which already existed in the 1940s but started to surface prominently in 1966. The foundations of this camp were constructed by a group of Yemeni youth who, during their studies in Egypt, were influenced by the political ideas of the Muslim Brothers. In Yemen, the group was joined by returning Yemenis from Indonesia to establish a Yemeni branch for the Egyptian Muslim Brothers called *al-Taleea'a al-Arabiyah al-Islamiyah (Arab Islamic Vanguards*, AIV), which constituted the core of the 1990 established influential Yemeni Congregation for Reform, or Islah. Followers of the Muslim Brothers among Egyptian teachers in Yemen provided administrative and spiritual assistance to the AIV. Its fierce opposition to the PDRY regime distinguished the Yemeni Islamist camp. In 1979 a military-political alliance between the Islamist camp and the YAR regime was established with the objective of combating both the PDRY regime in the south and the Left camp in the north. The alliance was blessed by the petrodollars of the Saudi kingdom. As a result, Yemeni Islamists not only escaped the authority ban on party

activity but also managed to take leading positions within the bureaucracy and security apparatus. Islamists had their strongest influence inside the ministry of education, where they succeeded in establishing a comprehensive Islamic education system parallel to that of the government (Al-Sayyaad, 1994). The Saudi support to the anti-Left alliance led to the infusion of Wahabism into the Yemeni Islamist camp[65].

In the south, on the other hand, political parties and organizations opposing the ruling party had to operate from outside the country. On the 26th of April 1980, these organizations were joined together in Cairo as a unified front operating under the umbrella of *al-Tagamouh al-Qawmi li Ganoob al-Yaman* (the pan Arabism Congress for South Yemen). The Congress was comprised of four major movements in addition to exiled South Yemeni politicians and activists in the North (Al-Mana, 1994).

The above historical tracing of party activity in the two republics of Arabia prior to their 1990 amalgamation reveals how internal and external political factors prevented the creation of pluralism out of the existing intellectual and ideological fermentation. It also reveals how the role of radical parties in organizing popular opposition was greater in Yemen than elsewhere in the Arab Middle East. Halliday (1997) attributes this situation to the rigidness of social structure in the hinterland and to the absence of the modernizing army, which had played such an important role in other Arab republics. In Chapter Six, I investigate the role of the military in shaping the Yemeni PPM.

5. 2.3 In the Aftermath of Unification: the Birth of Party Pluralism, Why?

Uniting two different political systems is a very problematic process that requires not only the amalgamation of state institutions in both systems but also structural changes in state-society relations and mode of governance. To manage this

difficult process, the two regimes, entrusted in October 1989 the so-called Committee on a Unified Political Regime (CUPR) with the task of defining the political form of a unified Yemen. For months, the CUPR debated the following four political scenarios for the proposed united republic:

1- Merging the General People's Congress (GPC) in the North and the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) in the South in one political body.

2- Retaining the GPC and YSP as independent political organizations with the adoption of a multiparty system of governance that provided individuals and groups the right to establish political parties.

3- Forming a broadly based national front made up of the GPC, YSP and all other national groups that believe and support the principals of the Northern September revaluation and the October Southern revolution.

4- Dissolving the GPC and YSP, and allowing the freedom to establish political parties and organizations (Kamim, 1996).

Realizing the difficulty of merging two ruling parties with deep ideological differences, the CUPR endorsed, on the 15th of January 1990, option number two; namely party pluralism as the foundation of the new unified Yemen. Its endorsement was accepted by the GPC and YSP since other options either carried the relinquishing of their power or the possible dominance of one party over the other or political instability to the new state posed by the emerging new political forces. The second option also goes well with the post-Cold War requirements of the international institutions and aid donors. For turning the idea of party pluralism into reality, a new set of constitutional and legal guarantees were declared. One of the most important of

these guarantees is article 39 of the 1991 constitution, which stipulated that "Citizens of all the republic may organize themselves politically and professionally, and in unions; they have the right to form social, cultural and scientific organizations and national unions, such that the goals of the constitution are served. The state shall guarantee this right and shall take the necessary measures to enable citizens to exercise it. The state shall also guarantee all freedoms for political, labor, cultural, scientific and social organizations and institutions"[66]. Such a democratic constitutional text represented the first public recognition of party pluralism by the political elites in the modern history of Yemen.

The two political elites of former North and South of Yemen, who once banned partisan activity, defined the future political framework for unified Yemen as a multiparty system, with the goal of transferring power peacefully through free and competitive elections run by an independent and neutral administration. A Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) was established, to carry out the tasks of administrating, supervising and monitoring elections. In 1992, a law was issued to specify the number of the SCER members in order to allow all parties to participate. In agreement with opposition parties, the GPC and YSP decided that the SCER would be a non-governmental commission with a membership comprised of representatives of all political parties and independent candidates.

Another important guarantee was provided by the 1991 Law no.66, which defines the principles and procedures in the establishment and activities of parties and political organizations. In addition to confirming, "all Yemenis are entitled to form parties and political organizations, and they have the right to a voluntary affiliation to any party or political organization", and affirming the "consolidation of national unity

through democratic practices in accordance with the constitution and given that the parties are national, popular, and democratic political organizations which work to organize the citizens and to represent them politically". The law sets down the conditions for the establishment of new parties and for the continuation of the activities of old ones. The law was made of seven chapters, the first of which is allocated for naming and definitions, the 2nd for foundations, principals and objectives, the 3rd for procedures of establishing parties, the 4th on funding and financing, the 5th on rights and duties

For setting up new political parties, article 14 of the Law requires that in order to receive a license from the Ministry of the Interior, political parties must have at least 75 founding members when it is set up and should have representation of at least 2,500 members distributed across the republic. This was done to avoid the emergence or development of regionalism party agendas that undermines the unification project. It is worth noting that the required number of founding members, seventy-five, is the highest threshold required in all Arab countries that allow party pluralism. For example, in Tunisia, the law on parties requires two or more founding members, in Algeria three members, in Egypt and Jordan fifty members.

As a result of the lifting of restrictions on association and expression[67], and the giving of legitimacy to political parties to compete in championing the demands of their constituencies, forty-six Yemeni parties announced their existence in the first three years after the unification. This much quoted number of parties in such a short period of time indicates how Yemen moved very quickly from a non-existing party pluralism to a highly fragmented party system. Many of these newly established parties, however, were too small and deserved Bahgat Korany's label of 'sofa parties', which means that

they are so small that all members of the party can sit on one sofa (Korany, 1994). All the announced Yemeni parties, large and small, can be classified, ideologically, into four main groups. First, the National (al-Watani), represented by the GPC and the post unification established parties of the September Democrats, Yemeni Union Forces, National Democratic Front, and the Yemeni Unionist Gathering. Second, the Leftist (al-Yasari), led by the YSP, and includes the Yemeni Revolutionary Party, Yemeni Vanguards, Liberation Front, League of Sons of Yemen, Popular Salvation Front, Liberation Front Party, and the Revolutionary Correction Front[68]. Third, the Islamists (al Tayaar al-Islami), contains 15 parties and political organizations, the strongest and most influential of which is the Islah followed by al-Haq (the Truth). And finally, Pan-Arab Nationalism (Qawmi), represented by the Iraqi and Syrian Ba'ath wings, and the Nasserists. The latter is made up today of seven parties: the Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization, Nasserite Hawks, Nasserite Democratic, Nasserite Correctional, Free Nasserite, Nasserite Arab Islamic, Nasserite Vigilantes. Interestingly, some of these are pro GPC while others support the YSP.

The following table reflects the ideological diversity and boom of Yemeni parties, already in the first year after unification. One of the reasons behind this boom is the uncontrolled birth of parties, which took place in the absence of a law that regulates and governs party establishment and activities. Law no.66 on parties was presented for approval to the parliament (*Majlis al-Nowab)* on the 5th of December 1990, but was finally approved on the 16th of October 1991, about one and half years after the unification and the founding of many new parties. It must be noted, however, that even after being issued, this law was not put fully into practice until 1995. This delay is due to the GPC/YSP disputes, the results of the 1993 elections, and the 1994 civil war.

Another reason behind the boom of Yemeni parties was the political hunger for political activism in public after the decades-long underground work.

Table 9: Parties and Political Organization Announced their Existence in 1990-91

Party/Political Organization	**Year/Period of Establishment**	**Political Orientation**	**Newspaper(s)**
GPC	Pre-Unification	Conservative/Tribal	Al-Mesaaq, 22 May
YSP	Pre-Unification	Progressive	Al-Thawri, Aden, Al-Sharah
Arab Socialist Ba'ath	Pre-Unification	Ba'ath Qawmi-Iraq Branch	Al-Gamaheer
The League of Yemen's Sons	Pre-Unification	Traditional Liberal	Ra'ai
The Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization	Pre-Unification	Nasserite Qawmi	Al-Wahdawi
Yemeni Alliance for Reform (Islah)	After-Unification	Islamic	Al-Sa'hwa, Al-Islah
The Nasserite Correctional	After-Unification	Nasserite Qawmi	Al-Ta'sheeh
Democratic Nasserits Party	After- Unification	Nasserite Qwami	Al-Ourobah
National Popular Forces	After-Unification	Islamic	Al-Shura'
Al-Haq (the Truth)	After-Unification	Islamic	Al-Ummah
Islamic Tawheed Movement	After-Unification	Islamic	Al-Bayan
Constitutional Freedom Party	After-Unification	Liberal/Traditional	Saout Al-Yaman
The Republican Party	After-Unification	Tribal/Conservative	Al-Sa'abeeyn
National Cohesion Conference	After-Unification	Tribal/Conservative	Without
September Democrats	After-Unification	Nationalist	Saout Al-Wehda
Social Nationalist Party	After-Unification	Liberal	Without
Yemeni Natational Alliance	After-Unification	Traditional/Tribal	Without
Hizb Allah	After-Unification	Islamic	Without
Islamic Front for Revolutionary Forces	After-Unification	Islamic	Without
Solidarity Congress for Yemeni Tribes	After-Unification	Tribal	Without
Yemeni Unity Forces	After Unification	Traditional Alliance	Without

Front			
National Democratic Front	After-Unification	Unidentified	Without
Liberation Front Party	After-Unification	Traditional Alliance	Without
National Salvation Front	After-Unification	Islamic	Without
Yemeni Shura Party	After-Unification	Islamic	Without
United Islamic Forces	After-Unification	Islamic	Without
General Congress for People Committees	After-Unification	Unidentified	Without
Nasseriet Unionist	After-Unification	Pan Arab Nationalism	Without
Popular Organization for Liberation Front	After-Unification	Unidentified	Without
Popular Progressive	After-Unification	Progressive	Without
Unionists of Brigades for Peace	After-Unification	Unidentified	Without
International Islamic Revolutionary Mov.	After-Unification	Islamic	Without
Vanguards of Yemeni Youth	After-Unification	Islamic	Without

Source: The table is constructed on the basis of the following literature in Arabic: Abu-Talib, H (1997), Ibid; Al-Zahari, M. (2004), Ibid; Al-Elemi, R. (1998), *al-Barameg al-Intekhabyah lil Ahzaab wa Tanzeemat al-Siyasyaha* (Election Programs for Yemeni Political Parties and Organizations), al-Thawabet Book. Al-Sala'ahi, F. (2006), *Ta'agroobat al-Ahzab al-Siyasyah fi al-Yaman* (the experiment of Yemen's Political Parties), in *al-Ahzab al-Siyasyah fi al-A; alam al-Arabi (*Political Parties in the Arab World), al-Marakz al-Lebnani lil Derasaat, Beirut. Pp 191-258.

The above constructed table illustrates how the landscape of parties in unified Yemen was shaped by political parties' growth. A number of relevant observations can be made here regarding this growth of parties: first, from this impressive list of parties, only two have experience in governing, the GPC from 1978-1990 and YSP from 1982-1990. Second, the majority of parties that existed before the unification were leftist in their orientations. Third, divisions among the parties that represent the Islamists and Nasserists are one of the main reasons behind the growth of Yemeni parties. In the case of Islamists, the division between Islah and Haq, on the one hand, and between the two of them and other small Islamist parties, on the other, can be explained on the basis of Sunni-Zaydi interests and differences in interpretations of the role of Islam in governing

socio-political life. Divisions among the Nasserists, however, are more complex to explain since their roots are traced to interpersonal differences among leaders of Nassirism, and to state orchestrated political games. Four years after the unification, even the oldest political party in Yemen, the Arab Socialist Ba'ath, was infected by division leading to the creation of Iraqi and Syrian branches of Ba'athism. Both branches are named after their leaders: the Iraqi branch is known as Qasim Salaam wing, while the Syrian is the Abdul Wahaab Mahmood wing (Al-Quds Newspaper, 1999).

The list of announced parties in one year is statistically impressive, but how representative and effective were these parties? Only elections were capable of answering this question. The following section attempts to read the Yemeni elections.

5.3. Reading Yemeni Elections: Indicators, Achievements and Limitations

Elections are mechanisms and manifestations of democracy. Whether they take place at presidential, parliamentary, municipal or civil society institutions level, elections reflect the degree of political maturity among the governing elites, the level of participation among the masses and the size of influence of political parties. Up until today, unified Yemen experienced seven elections: three parliamentary held in 1993, 1997, 2003, two presidential in 1999 and 2006 and two local council elections in 2001, 2006[69]. The course of development over these elections provides some indications of the achievements and limitations of constitutional party pluralism in Yemen. The following is an attempt at describing and explaining the environment and results of the three parliamentary elections.

Under the political, constitutional and legal conditions described above, the first test for Yemen's transition to party pluralism took place in the parliamentary elections of the 27th of April 1993. The preparations, implementation and results of this election marked, according to Carapico (1993), a "watershed for the Arabian Peninsula", and represented "the advent of organized mass politics" in a part of the Middle East where political affairs has long remained a closely-held family issue. The election was implemented on the basis of winner-take-all, single-member constituencies, most of which were highly competitive because the GPC and YSP were joined in the campaign by the many newly announced emerging parties, and over 1,960 independent candidates competing to fill the 301 parliamentary seats[70].

Out of the announced forty-six parties, however, only twenty-one took part in the elections. Fourteen of them had candidates and election programs and seven had candidates but no programs. Parties that did not participate in this election remained on the margins of Yemen's political life until today. The number of voters who cast their votes was an impressive 227, 1185 out of 268, 8323 registered voters. The counting of votes revealed that the GPC won 40.53% of the total seats, Islah 20.93 percent, YSP 18.6 percent, the Ba'ath Party secured 2.33 percent; Al-Haq party obtained two seats, three small parties obtained one seat each, while independent candidates obtained 15.95 percent (Majid, 2005). This means that only eight parties out of the twenty-one participating in the elections secured seats, indicating the wide difference between the reality of party pluralism on the ground and the statistical pluralism on paper.

The results abolished the GPC/YSP power sharing formula that dominated the 1990-93 transitional phase. The post election government was a coalition made up of the GPC, YSP and Islah. The latter is an influential Northern alliance of Islamists, tribal

leaders and prominent merchants. This form of government is, indeed, unique in the region. Stephen Day (2006), however, perceives this coalition as a strategic move from Ali Saleh to "marginalize his main rivals in the YSP", and to accommodate the Islamists. The latter have been instrumental in supporting Salih's regime in the 1980s, against the PDRY, which Islamists always perceive as anti-Islam state. Hemood Mansar (1997), on the other hand, argues that this coalition constitutes the first setback in the Yemeni experiment of democratization because it moved all the powerful players together to the top and made them share authority at all levels of governance; leaving behind a very weak and ineffective opposition (Mansr, 1997). Besides the emergence of a party with an Islamist face as a partner in government (which is also unique in the region) one of the most striking results of this election is the clear pattern of regional voting. The table below highlights this pattern of Northern and Southern Governorates based voting for the GPC and YSP.

Table 10: Geographical Distribution of Election Results (GPC-YSP)

Northern Governorates	**GPC**	**YSP**
Amanat al Aasemah	11	0
Al-Baydah	2	3
A'ab	17	2
Al-Hodaydah	20	1
Dhemar	12	1
San'a	21	2
Al Mouhweet	5	0
Hejah	14	0
Sa'adah	5	0
Al Jouf	1	0
Ma'arib	1	1
Southern Governorates	**GPC**	**YSP**
Aden	0	8
Abeen	1	7
Laheg	0	8

Shibwah	1	5
Hadramout	1	15
Al Mouhrah	0	2

Source: Abu-Taleb, H. (1994), In Arabic, Ibid, p.300

As shown in the table, the GPC won the elections in almost all northern governorates. The YSP, on the other hand, swept most southern governorates by landslide margins, winning 41 of 56 southern election districts. Interestingly, the YSP's additional 15 victories were mainly in areas along the borders of former South Yemen. Similarly, the dominantly Zaydi party of al-Haq gained all its votes from the Zaydi stronghold governorate of Saada, while the Nasserite Unionist Popular dominated the governorate of Taiz. A Yemeni partisan politician notes that this regional voting is a reflection of how the project of unification has not been constructed on the basis of building a state but rather on a sharing formula between two totalitarian regimes (Al-Khouli, 1994).

The Islah, however, gained its seats not on a regional basis, which indicates its nation-wide influence (Al-Farah, 1998). The results of the election also revealed another surprise, namely the high number of independent candidates wining parliamentary seats - 72% of the total number of election candidates, wining 47 seats. The majority of these candidates are merchants, senior bureaucrats and tribal leaders. For al-Zahri (2004, ibid) this indicates the weak capacity of some parties to accommodate all political activists.

The wining independent candidates, however, did not form a block of their own in the parliament. Instead, most of these candidates joined the GPC and Islah, causing what Humod Mansr (1997) calls a 'moving sand' effect on the political and partisan maps. By this, he refers to the fact that the election results were not final until the first

post election parliamentary session when the GPC and Islah announced the joining of independent candidates.

The post-election negotiation between the three partners in the coalition government of GPC-YSP-Islah proved to be explosive. The YSP complained about the concentration of power in San'a, and the expanding influence of Islamists and tribesmen in government. The socialists went even further by demanding the re-negotiation of the conditions on which the unification of Yemen was based. On July the 7th 1994, the boiling political contest between the YSP, on the one hand, and the GPC- Islah on the other, was settled on the battlefield. After two and a half months of fighting, the army of Salih, aided by Islamists, mainly Arab Afghans, prevailed, and political elites of the south fled into exile. In the post 1994 north-south war, the coalition government was made up of the two victorious partners- GPC and Islah. The latter was awarded control of several ministries and allowed to run a nation-wide network of religious schools[71]. The YSP defeat made it possible for the Salih regime to pass, on the 29th of September 1994, extensive constitutional amendments without a popular referendum. Out of the 131 original articles of the 1990 constitution, 59 articles were amended, 29 were added and one canceled. In addition to giving broad powers to Saleh[72], the amendments reflected the Islamist-merchant touch of Islah. For instance, the highlighting of the Islamic identity of Yemen, the state collection of alms, the observing of Islamic rituals and duties as a condition for running in parliament elections and securing ministerial posts (Mansoor, 2004), implementation of Islamic-based social justice, and the emphasis on the freedom of private economic activities.

The second test of Yemen's transition to democracy took place on the 27th of April 1997. This time, elections took place within a new political environment that is

shaped by the disturbance in the political equilibrium of the 1993 elections, and the amendments in the constitution of the unified state. Aware of the advantages, which this new environment generates for the GPC, Salih's regime invited more than 130 international monitors to supervise the elections. Only twelve parties participated in the elections; the YSP, along with a number of opposition parties boycotted the elections[73], and the GPC won a landslide victory, which gave it absolute majority in the parliament. Independent candidates won fifty-four seats, making them second to the GPC. Similar to what happened in post 1993 elections, eleven of these independents joined the Islah, and thirty-four joined the GPC. Islah lost ten of its 1993 parliamentary seats; becoming the third parliamentary block. As a result, Islah left the coalition government and joined the opposition. There is a consensus among members of the Yemeni opposition that the post 1997 elections period constitutes a giant step back in the road to democracy.

Encouraged by the dominance of the GPC in the parliament, Salih's regime made further constitutional changes, which give more power to the executive over the Legislature and Judiciary authorities. Balqees Mansoor (2004) identifies four major directions in these changes. First, reducing the legislative power of the parliament, and transferring such power to the Shura Council (all the members of the latter, as mentioned before, are appointed by the president). The transferred power includes deciding upon national issues of paramount importance such as the redrawing of borders, military and political alliances of the state and the announcement of war or peace. The parliament was left with legislative power over socio-economic issues. The second direction is towards extending the presidents term in office from five to seven years, and giving him the power to dissolve parliament[74], and to appoint governors and heads of local councils. Opposition parties argued that one of Salih's motives behind such changes is staying in power until his son, Ahmed, reaches the age of 40, which is

the required age, constitutionally, to be appointed as a president[75]. Third, undermining the significance of the constitution as a social contract by giving the GPC- dominated parliament the power to pass constitutional amendments without referendum. The fourth direction is aimed at prolonging and consolidating the post election position of the GPC by extending the period of parliament from four to six years. Below, a table is constructed to illustrate the extent of changes in the young constitution of unified Yemen:

Table 11: Constitutional changes in the period from 1990-2000

Date	Number of Articles in the Original Constitution	Number of Amended Articles	Number of Added Articles	Number of Cancelled Articles
29/09/1994	131	59	29	1
20/11/2000	159	13	6	2

Such extensive changes in such a short period of time suggest the following: first, the regime's experimentation with transition to democracy. Second, these changes are an indicator of political instability, which prevents the 'histro-legal' accumulation required for strengthening the institutional traditions of democracy, and hampers the growth of public trust in the political system (Mansoor, 2004).

Although, these changes had a negative impact on political pluralism, they have led to creating a sense of solidarity and common interest among the various opposition parties. In the third elections, which took place on the 27th of July 2003, the number of participating parties jumped from twelve to twenty-one, which is the same number in the first elections. Islah regained its position as the second party after the GPC, and there was a sharp decline in the number of seats won by independents, from 54 to 14.

In sum, the impact of Multi-party politics (ta' *addudiyya*) and elections on the political equilibrium in unified Yemen can be outlined as follows: 1990-93: GPC-YSP; 1993-94: GPC-YSP-Islah; 1994-97: GPC-Islah, and finally from 1997-2003-until today: the GPC dominates the Yemeni political arena. For gaining a comparative view of the results of the three elections, and to illustrate the dynamics of party pluralism, the following table is constructed:

Table 12: Elections Results: a Comparison

Political Party	1993 Elections	1997 Elections	2003 Elections
GPC	122	187	227
Islah	63	53	44
YSP	56	0	7
The Nasserite Unionist P.	1	3	3
Arab Socialist Ba'ath	7	2	2
Al Haq (the Truth)	2	0	0
Democratic Nasserites	1	0	0
The Nasserite Correctional	1	0	0
Independents	48	54	14

Politics of party pluralism are "the symbols and institutional face of democracy" (Wiktorowicz, 1999). A closer examination of Yemen's party pluralism mirrors the achievements and shortcomings of political parties in the corner of Arabia. At the achievement side, Al-Mutawakel summarizes, in an interview with the author, the following positive contributions of parties. The experience of pluralism has contributed in creating a degree of political awareness among different segments in the Yemeni society. It has, also, contributed in creating new traditions, as the next section

elaborates, among political parties, the most important of which is the establishment of a dialogue between parties that used to refuse to even sit next to each other.

The third important contribution can be detected in the attempt of parties to propagate a national framework of reference that overcomes the traditional socio-cultural frameworks of identification such as the tribal and regional affiliations. Fourth, party pluralism has contributed in breaking the wall of fear that lasted for decades in the Yemeni political arena. As a result, political and economic demands of the people became louder. Fifth, the exit of parties from the tunnel of secret work to take part in the competitive pluralism contributed in producing a constant pressure on parties to adjust their positions in such a way that enables them to compete with others. Sixth, political activism in public made it possible for parties to construct bridges with the masses, and to be in touch with their daily problems, concerns and needs, and to think about solutions. Seventh, the participation of parties in the elections was an educative experience that provided the parties with new skills and visions. Finally, the Yemeni experimentation with party pluralism has planted the seeds of conviction that political objectives should be achieved through the use of peaceful and democratic means. This achievement is of considerable importance to the political arena of Yemen, which was an arena of violence and instability. To this list, another major achievement can be identified in the area of partisan press, which not only deepened the sense of freedom of expression but also acted as a watchdog over the political and administrative systems.

The Yemeni party pluralism, however, suffers from a number of serious limitations and shortcomings. To begin with, the pre-unification legacy of secret partisan work continues to cast its long shadow over the decision making process inside the parties. According to al-Zahri (2004:451), decisions inside many Yemeni parties are

made by very few top members who instruct rather than involve the party cadres. In other words, there is an absence of transparent democratic structures inside parties, and concentration of power in the hands of party leaders. Ironically, this is the situation inside parties that are calling for decentralization of power and more democracy in governing the national socio-political life (Mousa, 1998). Another factor behind such an absence is attributed to the clutching of power by the old guards inside parties, which has led to leadership crises, resignations and divisions within parties.

The second major shortcoming is the reliance of many parties either on external sources of funding, mainly from Saudi, Libya, Gulf sheikhdoms, Syria and Iran, or on support from Yemeni governing elites. The latter source became lucrative after the unification when the elites of the North and South were co-opting leaders of parties, unions and tribes in an attempt at strengthening their positions against each other. Following the Northern hegemony, Salih's regime began manipulating the state annual subsidies to parties in such a way that allows the state authorities to reward and punish opposition parties. The regime adopted, also, a method of 'buying' elements inside the opposition parties. This is reflected in the migration of some members of opposition parties to the ruling party, in the search for financial opportunities and social status (Al-Salahi, 2004). As far as the external funding is concerned, Al-Salahi argues that it has turned into a jeopardizing source not only to Yemeni parties and the process of democratization, but also to Yemen national interests. Al-Moutawakel (2007), on the other hand, in an interview with the author, perceives such financial dependence of parties as a stigma because it turns political activism into mercenary work.

The third limitation of party pluralism can be found in the unfair competition between opposition parties and the ruling GPC. In addition to the pro-GPC

constitutional and legal changes, the GPC participates in elections relying on the power and resources of the executive and administrative apparatuses of the state, including the media. The victory of the GPC, according to opposition parties, reflects the capacity of the state not that of the GPC. The fourth important limitation presents itself in the failure of political parties to introduce a qualitative institutional alternative to the strong tribal structure. The party-tribe relations in today's Yemen, are shaped, as section 5.5 in this chapter addresses in more detail, by what al-Zahri (2004) calls '*Qabyalat al-Hizb* (tribalization of party) and *Hazbanat al-Qabeela* (partisization of tribe). From a theoretical point of view, this means that Yemen's party pluralism is neither modern nor traditional.

Fifth, mobilization activities of many parties are limited, formal and implemented only during elections time. The activities of GPC, for instance, despite its large number of members and the availability of financial resources, are almost non-existing once elections are ended. Sixth, voting during elections take place on the basis of the influence of individual candidates, rather than on party programs. The seventh limitation is the weak performance of the parliament, which in turn de-motivates electors. This weakness is attributed to the dominance of the GPC in parliament and to the nature of the post 1994 Yemen's political system, which is neither a full presidential system nor a parliamentary one[76].

Another clear shortcoming is the absence of a clear and well-researched economic reform plan in the programs of opposition parties. Finally, the party pluralism system in Yemen suffers from the low representation of women and it is a system that is negatively affected by the high percentage of illiteracy, which is estimated to be up to 46% of the population[77]. This high rate of illiteracy reduces the effectiveness of partisan

press in propagating their views and in playing their role as important agents of political mobilization and socialization. To conclude, Salih's regime has successfully manipulated the transition to democracy and the party pluralism system to its own advantage. This type of manipulation is explained in the following observations of Ehtashami (2204): "Apply the law to regulate access to levers of power, and to control participation of political forces. They, in effect, use the civil law to exert control of the political process. Unchecked, such practices can easily transform a transitional step towards democracy into an 'elected authoritarian' regime in which elections become no more than a hollow shell for disguising de-liberalization". The following two sections address two particular features in Yemen's party pluralism: cross-ideological coalitions, and tribalization of parties.

5.4. Opposition's Cross-Ideological Coalitions: Yemeni Islamists and the Left Parties

The ultimate objective of opposition parties, everywhere, is to govern. There is, however, no single model for political opposition to follow in order to achieve such an objective. In this regard, Abduallah Baalqeez (2001) identifies three possible models in the Arab Middle East: monopoly of authority (*Heyazat al Soulta*), dividing authority (*Eqtesaam al Soulta*), and sharing authority (*al-Musharaka fi al Soulta*). Baalqeez notes that since the 2nd half of the 20th Century, the monopoly of authority, mainly via military coups, has been the most common model in the region for political opposition to follow. While a sharing authority model has been applied in Lebanon and Morocco, dividing authority, on the other hand has been put into practice only in Yemen, and for a short period of time. Following the defeat of the Southern Yemeni army and ideology[78], Salih's regime jumped, quickly, to the sharing authority model with Islah, also for a short period of time. For more than a decade, however, Salih's regime has been

adopting the *Heyazat al Soulta* Model (HSM), but at the same time tolerating party pluralism. In this sense, the regime has been pushing unified Yemen towards authoritarian pluralism. The regime's reluctance to continue walking on the road to democracy and its adoption of the HSM has resulted, however, in creating a sense of solidarity among the Yemeni opposition parties. This section attempts to describe and explain the growing cross-ideological inter-party co-operation and the current dynamics of Islamists-Left relations.

Opposition parties' coalitions are one of the striking features of the map of unified Yemen's party pluralism. In the period from 1993 to 2004, three major blocks of such coalitions have surfaced in the political landscape. The first was the Supreme Coordination Council for Opposition Parties (SCCOP), which was established in 1995, and was composed of the YSP, the Nasserite Unionist Popular, al-Haq, Socialist Arab Ba'ath, Constitutional Freedom, and Popular Forces. The SCCOP was founded on the basis of the so called *Waseeqt al-A'had wa al-Itefaq* (Document of Promise and Agreement), which highlights the commitment to peaceful and democratic means of political opposition and binds parties of the coalition with their common objectives stipulated in the election programs. The second coalition, National Council for Opposition (NCO), emerged in 1997, and was made of eight small parties; seven of them had no representation in the parliament t- The Nasserite Correctional, Democratic Nasserits, Liberation Front, National Democratic Front, Sons of Yemen, Yemeni League, Social Qawmi, and Arab Socialist Ba'ath. With the government resorting to a tactic of cloning opposition parties in order to divide them and undermine their mobilization capacity, the number of parties in the NCO would later grow to include many of those mostly one-person-parties that usually carry names similar to those of actual opposition parties. In fact, the NCO was formed by government as a reaction to

the formation of SCCOP. While the number of parties within the NCO tends to fluctuate because some of its parties end up merging with the ruling party, they all support president Saleh's initiatives and policies and strictly act as a loyal opposition.

The third, and, indeed, the most influential coalition, is the 2002 founded Joint Meeting Parties (JMP). Because of its significance as a cross-ideological block of Islamists, Socialists and Nasserists parties and its impact on today's political life, I allocate the rest of this section for discussing the role of the JMP in reshaping regime-opposition relations in the corner of Arabia. Prior to doing so, I sketch the following table as an illustration of Yemen's cross-ideological party coalitions:

Table 13: Party Coalitions in Yemen (1993 -2004)

Supreme Coordination Council for Opposition Parties (SCCOP)	**National Council for Opposition (NCP)**	**Joint Meeting Parties (JMP)**
YSP	Arab Socialist Ba'ath	YSP
Arab Socialist Ba'ath	Democratic Nasserists	Islah
Nasserists Unionists	Liberation Front	Nasserists Unionists
Al-Haq	Popular Unity	Al-Haq
Popular Forces Union	Correctional Nasserists	Popular Forces Union
	Social Qawmi	Arab Socialist Ba'ath

The rise of the JMP is linked to two events: First, the post 1997 election's move of the powerful Islah party from being in a sharing-governing formula with the ruling party to being, once again, in the trench of the opposition. The second event was the assassination of the leading YSP politician and progressive intellectual, Umar Jarullah[79]. While the latter event acted as a catalyst for inter-party dialogue, the former event initiated a strategically based cooperation amongst opposition parties. In addition

to being a unique experience[80] in the region, Islah's change of positions created a new political environment and reality for, both, the regime and the opposition. For the regime, the GPC became the sole carrier of government responsibility, which in turn imposed new challenges for the government to implement the GPC election promises. For the opposition, on the other hand, the joining of Islah was a fresh supply of ammunition, which was much needed in the opposition's campaign of exerting pressure on Salih's regime, and in monitoring the policies and performance of the government.

The performance of the JMP during the last few years, particularly during the presidential elections of 2006, has led observers of the region to identify it as a national block that is forging a formidable unified opposition based on a broad, cross-ideological alliance (Hamzawy & Brown, 2007). But what holds Islamists and Leftists together in a conservative tribal country like Yemen where politics are constantly moving sands? How can such strange ideological bedfellows stay together and maintain their partnership despite the concerted effort of Salih's regime to break such a relation?[81] No complete answer can be constructed without, first, taking note of the fact that at international level of analysis, Islamists and the Left do share a number of similar views, for example the view of globalization as a guise for US political, economic and cultural hegemony and repression. The invitation of the former Mayor of London (Ken Livingstone) to Sheikh Yosef Al-Qaradawi to visit his city, as well as Iran's Ahmadinejad warm relations with the rising Leftist governments in South America exemplify this new form of international anti-imperialism movement. At the regional level, what bridges the ideological gap between Islamists and the Left are the US military interventions, the US double standards reflected in its calls for political modernization and democracy while supporting repressive regimes, the continued denial of Palestinian human rights and Israel's politics of occupation, humiliation and

aggression. At national level, on the other hand, the recent cross-ideological bridge-building efforts in the Arab Middle East are tactics for uniting Islamist and leftist ranks in the face of emergency laws, rampant corruption, manipulated election results and regimes war on, both, religious and secular-based legitimate political opposition. Concrete examples of such cross-ideological alliances have been reported from Egypt during the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2005 and from Jordan in the parliamentary elections of 2003 (Schwedler & Clark, 2006). In Yemen, too, the emerging Islamists-Socialists-Nasserists alliance under the umbrella of the JMP should be examined through the prism of the broader new political context of the ongoing battle of opposition parties and activists in the Arab Middle East over applying the constitutional and legal rights of citizenship, establishing a fair form of governance, lifting restrictions on democratic expressions, broadening the base of political participation, altering foreign policies and peaceful transfer of power.

In an interview I have conducted with Mohammed Qahtan, the chief of the political bureau of the Islah party and the head of the Muslim Brothers wing in the party, Qahtan made the following remarkable statement: "We have subordinated our ideological agendas to what we all in the opposition have in common, namely, not to leave money and political authority sleep together in the same bed without monitoring, that only through cooperation and coordination we can press for political, economic and social reforms that are essential for breaking the hegemony of the GPC and saving Yemen from sliding into political chaos, and that sharing national problems and crises together, regardless of political and ideological orientations, reduces the intensity of the crises pains". The issue here, Qahtan continues, is "not about the role of Islam in political life but about the role of the opposition in creating and maintaining a balance between the central authority and society".

Bearing in mind that Islah fought with the GPC, a bloody civil war against the YSP, and was even accused, prior to the war, of orchestrating political assassinations of dozens of southern socialists (Halliday, 2006), this statement by a leading figure inside Islah is, indeed, very significant. It indicates, first of all, how; even, in the most conservative and least developed Arab country, strategic alliances are becoming more important than ideology in politics. Second, it is a sign of the increasingly flexible pragmatism within the Yemeni secular and religious-based political opposition (Philips, 2007). Reading the program of the JMP confirms Qahtan's statement. The program calls, for instance, for "a parliamentary system with diminished executive powers, an independent judiciary, improved electoral laws, and the depoliticization of the military"[82]. Efforts of the JMP were crowned on November 2005 by announcing the JMP Document on Comprehensive National and Political Reform. The document states clearly, "There are no more fantasies in the minds of Yemenis about the catastrophe that is waiting for them…. Total reform is the only choice" (Philips, 2006).

In a short span of time, the JMP succeeded, politically and psychologically, to challenge the regime-drawn red lines. From winning elections in all Students Unions to forcing the GPC to sign a national document that guarantees the independence of civil society organizations, to posing a serious challenge to Salih in the 2006 presidential elections. In the latter, the JMP named Faisal Bin Shamlan as their candidate for standing against Salih, the ruler of Yemen since 1978, which makes him the second-longest serving head of a state in the region, behind Gaddafi of Libya. The Washington Post described the Salih-Shamlan election competition as "the first time in modern Arab history that a president went head-to-head with an opponent who had a substantial popular following" (Abu-Nasr, 2006). Despite reports of election irregularities carried

out by the regime agencies, Saleh got 77.2 percent of the vote, while Shamlan received 21.8 percent. This percentage stands in sharp contrast to the presidential elections in the region, where Mubarak of Egypt 'gained' 88.6 percent, and Bin-Ali of Tunisia 94.5 percent. Because of the JMP, Yemen's 2006 presidential elections were not just one more showpiece election common in the region. Today, the very young JMP with its impressive organizational structures in the form of a Supreme Council, Executive Authority, governorates-level committees and Technical Offices for Election Coordination (Yemen Strategic Report, 2006; Burrowes, 2005), continues to be a unified, well organized and effective opposition group, where its criticism of the government and the regime is well received by the masses (Tregan, 2007).

5.5. Tribalization of Political Parties: Political Nomadism

The 1993 and 1997 elections demonstrated how tribal leaders and tribal voters play a significant role in shaping the mechanisms and strategies of Yemen's political parties. Although the exact number of members of political parties with tribal backgrounds and affiliations is not available and difficult to obtain, senior party figures admit that there is a strong tribal representation inside Yemen's party system. For instance, Mohammed Qahatan, the chief of Islah's political bureau, admits that there are tribal sheikhs and tribal figures inside the party, and that many of 'the sons and symbols' of the Yemeni tribes are members of the Islah.

In the two parliamentary elections of Yemen, a massive participation of tribesmen and women was reported. Such participation is remarkable if one takes into consideration the high illiteracy rate among the tribal population of Yemen. I have raised a question regarding this unusual relation between the high rate of illiteracy[83] and the high rate of participation in election to a number of Yemeni political scientists and

sociologists. Almost all of them provided the same answer: *da'aei al qabilah*, summon of the tribe. The rational of this 'summon' is based on an ancient unwritten contract that outlines the rights, benefits and responsibilities of tribal membership. Answering tribal 'summons' issued by their sheikhs, which call for help in protecting the tribe's territories or rushing to aid allied tribal units under threat is one of these responsibilities. Not responding to such summons is considered to be a sign of betrayal and anti-tribal solidarity. In this sense, the political participation of tribes takes the form of responding to the 'summon' of tribal candidates in the elections, whether these candidates are independents or affiliated with political parties. In other words, Yemeni tribesmen and women vote for their sheikhs and the sheikhs of their allied units not on the basis of political party membership rather on the basis of tribal membership. Sheikh Ahmed Garoun, who is a GPC member of *Majlas al Nawa,* the House of Representatives, asserts the power of the tribal summon by stating: "the votes we get come from our men in our tribes. My people in my tribe stood by me during the elections, including my cousins and others who are affiliated with Islah and Nasserists. Our tribal people will never surrender to partisan politics, the tribe comes first" (Al-Zahri, 1996). Not surprisingly, therefore, tribal sheikhs attract the regime and all political parties, regardless of ideological orientations.

One of the most striking features of the tribalization of Yemen's political parties is the collective entry and exit of sheikhs and their men from and to political parties. For example, a member of *Majlis al Shoura* in the Islah party, Sheikh Qa'ed Sheweet resigned from the party and joined the GPC along with his son, who is also a member of the Islah, and all his tribesmen announced withdrawing their support to the Islah. Another concrete example is Sheikh Abu Shawareb's wining of a parliament seat in the

1993 elections as a candidate for the Ba'ath Party, and wining his seat in 1997 elections as a candidate for the GPC.

CONCLUSIONS

The autonomy and effectiveness of political parties is a key indicator of political modernization and democratization. Generally speaking, all political parties, regardless of their ideologies and tactics, claim that they represent the masses. In the case of Yemen, however, the majority of the masses are organized along tribal lines. Yemen's political parties, secular and religious, failed in competing with or replacing the strong

tribal identifications and affiliations. This is because tribes remain closer to the people, and more effective as social, political, economic and psychological safety networks. The experience of the leftist YSP illustrates how undermining forces of tribalism in a tribal country is a vital mistake. The success of the ruling party, the GPC, on the other hand, lies in its nature as a meeting point for different political ideologies and a 'big tent' for accommodating tribal and commercial elites. However, despite the fact that Yemen is the most traditional Arab society where tribes are more deeply rooted in the collective psyche than parties, Yemeni tribes did not reject the idea of political modernization, as long as such an idea is accompanied with economic development and does not jeopardise tribal values. In other words, tribesmen and women have participated in the process of political modernization on the basis of their tribal traditions.

The case of Yemen illustrates how the character, ideology and effectiveness of political parties are shaped by history as much as by the provisions of the law. The historical tracing of political parties in the corner of Arabia teaches us that the intricacies of the broader international and regional contexts should never be neglected when dealing with manifestations of political modernization in the Arab Middle East. The involvement of Britain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, as well regional ideological movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Nasserism and the Arab Ba'ath exposes how the colonial, monarchical, secular Arab nationalist and Islamists interests compete even in the most tribal, the poorest and most peripheral Arab state. Party pluralism in Yemen is linked to Migdal's 'world historical moment'. Such a moment was created by the disintegration of the USSR, and the new geopolitics in the Arabian Peninsula following the US-led Desert Storm operation.

The discussions in this chapter have shown how party pluralism became the cornerstone of united Yemen, and how transition to democracy was based on a regime

survival strategy. The grand political project of unification acted, therefore, as a catalyst for accelerating the pace of the process of political modernization. This was reflected most notably in the fields of freedom of establishing political parties; freedom of expression, and it was reflected in the steps taken with the aim to institutionalize the democratic process in parliamentary legislations or elections. However, the content of such new political orientations remained ineffective, and the inherited patterns and behaviors of the pre-unification regimes were reinstalled. Two main reasons can explain this walking backwards in the road of democracy. First, party pluralism was engineered by Salih regime to achieve pragmatic objectives during the unity periods. Once the southern partner in the unity was defeated, and replaced by northern tribal/Islamist partners, pluralism became not an essential tool for regime survival. The second reason is that the Saudis used their financial power to influence the abortion of political pluralism in Yemen in order to prevent the spill over effect of democracy to the rest of the Peninsula.

Studying the elections that took place within the attempt of Yemen's transition to democracy demonstrates how tribal leaders had an edge over both leftist and Islamist political parties. This is because unlike the leftists, who often criticize and sometimes ridicule the Islamists and their theocratic 'primitive' world-views and programs in such a way as to appear to be looking down at tribal and Islamic values, Yemen's tribal candidates appealed to both traditional tribal values and Islam to mobilize the support of the masses. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, lack of tribal support was at the heart of the YSP (Yemeni Socialist Party) failures in post unity parliamentary elections. Tribal candidates have also an advantage over the Islamists in Islah party. The Muslim Brothers and the Salafi-inspired Zindani camps in the Islah have often mocked the practices of

tribal folk Islam, and labeled such practices as reflections of pre-Islamic *jahilia* ethos. In short, tribal candidates have a far broader appeal.

The Yemeni party pluralism-based elections demonstrate, also, that the appearance of political parties does not necessarily signify political modernization. The classical view of political parties is that they are modern organs, which play a crucial role in linking leaders and masses, and mobilizing and organizing the cooperation of large numbers of people for common goals that are beyond small group politics. According to this view, party politics are similar to class politics. In the case of Yemen, however, party politics have turned into tribal not class politics. Finally, despite all the socio-cultural and economic particularities of Yemen, state-political parties' relations are to a large extent similar to those in the region. At the heart of the similarity lies the fact that Arab political elites have opted for the symbols of political modernization, not the substance.

CHAPTER 6

Civil-Military Relations in Yemen: The Role of Officers and Tribal Sheikhs Network

INTRODUCTION

The military is a key political actor in the regimes of a variety of countries throughout the Middle East. The deep diversity of civil-military relations in the region, however, poses a challenge to generalizations. For example, civil-military relations in Lebanon are characterized by the absence of military officers in the structure of political elite; this is mainly due to the "resistance from communal leadership" (Picard, 2008). In Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, civilians (the Royal Saudi family) have always been in control of the army. This Saudi 'civilian' superiority, however, did not provide the best chance for political liberalization as some leading western theorists in the field, have argued (Cook, 2004). One can include other deviant and unique cases, for example that of Sudan, where the boundaries of the military and the state may formally be clear; but in practice they are very porous (Barltrop, 2008), Jordan, where the state is in a

permanent intertwining with the military and Iraq, which already had an officer corps prior to the founding of the country and army (Hashim, 2003).

This chapter concerns itself with the task of exploring the Yemeni civil-military relations. The analysis in this chapter involves not only reportage of sequenced events, but as well, a particular effort to construct coherent linkages of contextual historical, political, socio-economic and structural factors. Apart from any implication or interest, it may have for the comparative study of civil-military relations in the region; this chapter should serve as a background against which the political orientations of the present regime in Yemen are understood. The chapter is guided by one central question: what is the role of the military in shaping the process of political modernization in united Yemen? The chapter begins with exploring the role of the military in the political life of the Arab Middle East. This will be followed by mapping and analyzing civil-military relations in the YAR, PDRY and ROY, and the impact of such relations on shaping the Yemeni process of political modernization. This chapter should be seen as a response to recent academic calls to researchers of the Middle East to take part in the effort of finding a shift in the way civil-military relations in the region are studied[84].

6.1. Revisiting the Military in the Arab Middle East: the Road to 'Secucracy'

Oligarchic dominance and the weakness of the bourgeoisie in post-independence Arab states led to military-led middle class breakthrough and the emergence of authoritarian Arab populist states. In their efforts to establish and consolidate their authority, the military-led political elites in post-independence Arab states gave priority to strengthening national institutions of coercion. Every newly independent Arab state was keen to have a strong modern national army and effective domestic security institutions. In countries such as Algeria and South Yemen, the first nucleus of the

national army was made of fighters and national mujahedeen who participated in the anti-colonial struggle. While in others such as Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia and Morocco, the post-independence political elites relied on military national units that were founded by colonial authorities. Other countries in the region had the nucleuses of their armies made of a mixture of freedom fighters and colonially established fighting units. In the first years in their independence, many Arab countries opened national military colleges or hired foreign military advisors to train their armies and started sending groups of officers for military training courses abroad (Hamaad, 1987). For post independence Arab political elites, the new national armies were perceived not only as symbols of their newly gained sovereignties but also as an agent of national integration for the sons of all the regions within their territories, as a factory for producing the much needed national identity in their fragmented societies and as an effective tool of modernization and development.

Shortly after the establishment of the new armies of the new states, armed conflicts and massive wars erupted in the region, the most dangerous of which is the Arab-Israeli conflict. The latter with its hyper international character and tragic regional consequences, along with direct and indirect external military interventions in the region acted as a catalyst for the political ascendancy of military institutions and officers. In addition to causing a very early military mobilization, conflicts and interventions in the Middle East made the region the most militarized one in the world, as measured by military expenditure in proportion to economic output, and by size of military establishments in relation to population. Syria, for example, has almost 400,000 under arms, in addition to 300,000 reserves (Bills & Springborg, 2000). In Iraq, on the other hand, the ratio of military power relative to population has grown from 3.6 per 1,000 in 1932 to 55.5 in 1990 (Kadhim, 2006).

The context of Arab's military defeat in 1948 and the dominance of corrupt royal families and oligarchies of landowners brought military officers to power in many Arab countries in the 1950s and 1960s. These officers were instruments of the new middle class. They were imbued with populist ideologies, possessing a variety of modern organizational skills and committed to secular nationalism and various interpretations of socialism (Halpern, 1963). By the end of the 1960s, the successive military coups in Syria, Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, Yemen, Algeria and Libya resulted in dividing the Arab world into two political clusters: populist republics and monarchical/tribal sheikhdoms.

Reading the pronouncements of Arab coups d'etat is illustrative of the sense of superiority that military officers acquired and the belief they developed of their historical role. For example, in a radio statement, the Sudanese chief of armed forces announced on the 17th of November 1958 that his military coup was 'natural' in order to put an end to the political chaos brought by a civilian government (Be'eri, 1970). In his 'Philosophy of the Revolution', Nasser[85] of Egypt, on the other hand, elaborates an integrated theory about the historical role of officers as pioneers of revolutions and bearers of a holy task. He notes, "It was the prevailing situation that destined the army to be the only force capable of acting to change the situation". He goes further to explain that in July 1952 the Egyptian army had to operate in the capital city and not at the borders of the country because of the deep feeling, which officers have about their duty towards their homeland…if such a duty is not carried out by us, we the officers, it means that we have abandoned the holy responsibility bestowed upon us. Eight years after Egypt's revolution, Abdel Kareem Qasim of Iraq asserts Nasser's views by noting that: "our brothers outside the army would have never been able to gain their rights by

peaceful means. The army had to carry out the revolution on their behalf"(Be'eri, 1970) … "we have taken the initiative to liberate the beloved homeland from the clutches of the corrupt clique which was installed by the colonizers to rule over the people" (Kadhim, 2006). Such military statements reflect the perception that dominated the Arab world in the 1950s-60s, namely that Arab countries are passing through a dark period of domination, extreme underdevelopment and tyranny and that jumping over such a period requires a revolution-induced radical change of the existing social and political structures. According to this perception, only military officers are capable of bringing such a desired change.

The success of military-led coups in elite-dominated Middle Eastern societies, and the reliance of Arab monarchial systems on the loyalty of their militaries for survival has altered the social structure, and represented an alternate route to power and dominance in the region. Arab militaries, however, have failed to develop into classless and non-sectarian institutions. The examples of the privileged political status of Alawis, Sunni Arabs, northern Arabs, Zaydi/Hashid tribesmen and Nagdis in Syrian, Iraqi, Sudanese, Yemeni and Saudi armies are illustrative of how Arab militaries have turned into vehicles of 'minoritarian domination' (Drysdale, in Kolkowicz& Korbonski, 1982). The Arab military became, also, an alternative to the agricultural and urban elites that dominated post-independence political space in the region[86]. I should note here that in many cases, the dominance of particular ethnic groups and their exclusive access to membership in the officer corps in the post independence period was facilitated by the Ottomans, and by the British-French colonial administrations in the region.

In addition to industrialization, economic development, socio-cultural progress, social justice, pro-poor and middle class policies, and consolidation of national unity and independence, the vocabulary of the new military elites in the Arab world included

Arab unity and liberating Palestine. Politics under this new military elitism has become an arena allocated only for mobilizing people and resources for achieving the desired national social objectives and for supra national pan Arabism-related political and ideological goals. The military elitism in Egypt went further to include the export of the revolution and the sponsoring of military coups in other countries in the region. In a speech that was delivered three months after Colonel Abdullah Sallal led a military coup against the Imam of Yemen, with the support and blessing of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser made the following remark: "Soon there will be a Saudi Sallal and a Jordanian Sallal who will uproot the monarchial systems in these two countries"[87].

The impact of the political and ideological environment that was created by the new military elitism in the region on the process of political modernization was negative. These negative consequences can be summarized as follows: (1) The existence of power centers outside the central authority of the state was not tolerated, and authority was concentrated in the hands of the ruler and his close officers. (2) The Arab nation-state that started its independence with a plural liberal moment has turned into a one-party/organization political system. (3) The civil wing in the new ruling military systems has changed from being "a politicized group into being bureaucratic-technocratic elite, which implement decisions without taking part in the making of the decisions" (Ibrahim, 2005). (4) The enlargement and strengthening of the infrastructure of coercion were accompanied by expanding the classic duty of the internal security system - from enforcing law and maintaining public order to the silencing and even terrorizing of legal opposition. (5) The media was transformed into a tool for ideological dictating, as a medium of public relations for the ruling party/organization, and, above all, for glorifying the ruler. Even Arab monarchical systems that were not engulfed by the waves of military coups and revolutions, adopted a similar approach to

that of the military-technocratic elites in Arab republics. The monarchial elites in Morocco, Jordan and in the Arabian Peninsula have carried out a silent coup against political pluralism, turned the media into a propaganda tool and strengthened the infrastructure of coercion. Unlike the republican elites, however, the monarchial ones had a firmer control over the military and security institutions. They did this by appointing members of their royal families at the top of these institutions, and at the same time appointed trusted elements at the middle levels of leadership within their militaries, from Colonel to major Colonel. This mid-level leadership has been always the supplying pool of leaders of the military coups in the Arab world.

Indeed, monarchical systems have benefited from the fatal mistakes, failures and defeats of the military systems in the region, and have learned to avoid selling grand political and economic dreams to their citizens the way republican military elites did. Leaders in oil monarchical systems have also learned that too strong an army would constitute a fertile institution for a coup. They preferred, therefore, to recruit expatriates in their armies, and to depend on 'over the horizon' help from Washington in the case of serious internal/external threats. The nature of deployment and procurement, defense spending, and indeed the whole development of the armed forces in monarchical Arab systems reflect the fact that the defense of the royal families is intimately tied up with the defense of the state and its sources (Teitelbaum, 2003).

A glance at the ideological military-states of the Arab world in the 1950s and the 1960s reveals that today they have turned into police and *mukhabarat* states, where internal security institutions have become not only the major actors in protecting the power elites, but also the main institution of securing the communication channels between the various power centers inside the political system. The rise of militant Islamic groups helped the overseeing power of the security institutions in the region.

Military institutions of war and defense, on the other hand, became integral parts of repressive police states, and the military officers, who were once readily identified by the masses, have turned into "members of an elite with whom the average person has little in common materially and ideologically" (Kamrava, 2000).

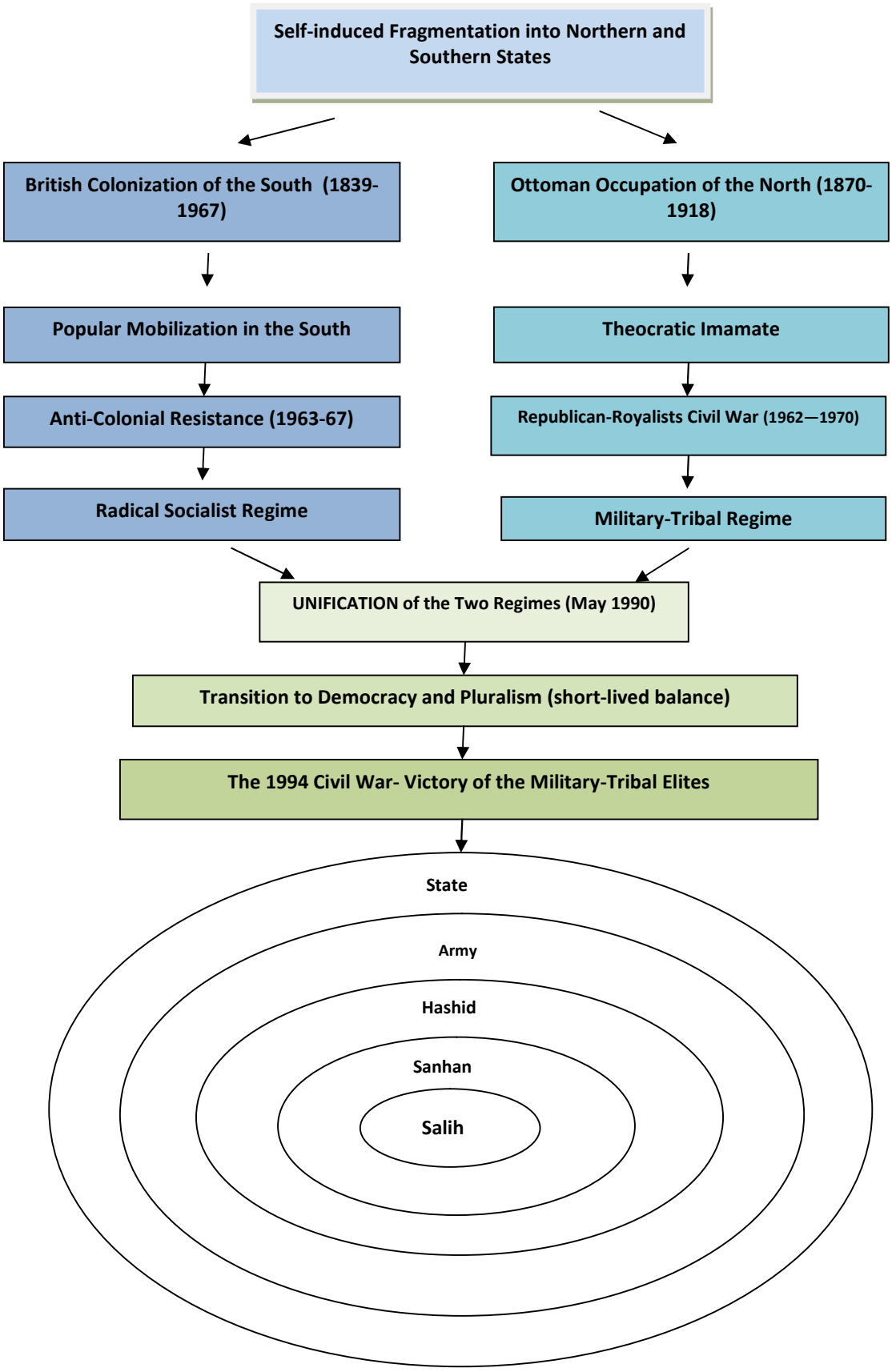
In the 21st century Arab Middle East, it has become clear to old and new watchers of the region that the failure of the military authoritarian-modernizing regimes, and their zealous efforts to depoliticize their militaries have resulted in the ascendancy of a new political tool - *Amnocratyah* (secucracy), which is a tool used for controlling social forces while moving, quietly, to a post-crisis period. *Amnocratyah* refers to a mode of governance in which security officers take over the role of military officers. The latter found a new role as the guardian not the challenger of the regimes, and became in favor of ruling not governing (Cook, 2007). In other words, they have repositioned their locations in the political arena and turned into the primary defenders and beneficiaries of the political status quo.

This new mode of governance is the outcome of the fact that the military states of the post-independence Arab world have exhausted their strategies, and despite the expansion and even inflation of their state institutions, have failed to become strong, independent, responsive and productive political entities. Instead, they have turned into violent, class-based and dependent peripheral states (Ali, 2005). In this regard, Borhan Ghalioun (1993) makes the following provocative remark: the real coup in the history of Arab societies is not the one carried out by the military against the state. The real coup is the state itself, which has turned into the main source of violence in Arab societies. With this image of the Arab state as monstrous security state, scholars of the region argued that fear has replaced legitimacy as the source of regime continuity in the Arab world (Hudson, 1991).

However, the roots of the current dominant position of the security and military apparatuses in the polities of region can be found in the struggle against colonization, and in the politics of the Cold War. The latter provided authoritarian military regimes in the region with the opportunity to rely on support from one of the two superpowers. The unresolved conflict with Israel and external military interventions in the region constitute an extension of colonization and the Cold War. In short, the violent anti-colonial struggle, which was followed by decades of conflict with Israel, in the context of the Cold War, greatly strengthened the coercive institutions at the expense of social forces. This in turn resulted in strengthening the mechanism of authoritarianism (Richards, 2005).

In the case of the Republic of Yemen, as will be discussed in the rest of this chapter, the political role of the military/security officers in the governance structure is not a straightforward story. Instead, it is multifaceted and complex. Guided by Huntington's argument that "the most important causes of military intervention in politics are not military but political, and reflect not the social and organizational characteristics of the military establishment, but the political and institutional structure of the society" (Huntington, 1968), the following section is allocated for analyzing the impact of civil-military relations on shaping the PPM in Yemen. To summarize and to prepare the stage for investigating, through the lens of civil-military relations, the role of the military officers and tribal sheikhs in shaping the process of political modernization in Yemen, the following diagram constructs the background over the past century and half, against which Yemen's tribal and military elites of today have emerged and evolved.

Fig. 1 The Yemeni State and the Circles of Support and Loyalty in Salih's Regime



6.2 The PPM and Civil-Military Relations in a Neo-Tribal State

> **"***As an army officer I can be sacked, just like any government employee can be sacked. As a member of my tribe, however, I remain forever*" (Ali Abdullah Salih, President of Yemen)[88]

Civil-military relations are power relations that are encompassing not only the relations between political elites and the military, but also the entire relations between the military and society at all levels. Like other types of power relations, civil-military relations are a type of action that does not respond immediately. Instead, they act upon existing actions or on those that may emerge (Foucault, 1982). In the case of Yemen, civil-military relations are articulated on the basis and within the context of a tribal state. The above-mentioned statement of the self-promoted Field Marshal Ali Abdullah Salih is illustrative of how the president of the country perceives his contract with the military and the one with the tribe. The latter, according to him, is a life-long one.

The purpose of the section is to analyze the complex role played by military officers in shaping the current Yemeni process of political modernization (PPM). The analysis approaches the task of relating the armed forces to the PPM by tracing the historical evolution of Yemen's army, recording its intervention in politics, identifying the ideological currents within the officer corps, highlighting the exogenous factor, and analyzing the patterns of cooperation and control between the military, tribal leaders and the regime. The section pays its attention to the links between the tribal factor in the formation of the military in Arab tribal republics, on the one hand, and the scope of military intervention in politics in the other. To compensate the scarcity, if not the absence, of literature on civil-military relations in Yemen, and the difficulties in collecting military related data, I have relied on Arabic sources such as historical documents, autobiographical writings of leading Yemeni politicians, memoirs of

Egyptian generals who participated in saving the republic of Yemen during the 1960s civil war, and the memoirs of the influential late Sheikh Al-Ahmar, the Sheikh of all Sheikhs of Yemen. I have also made an extensive use of the archives of Yemeni armed forces magazines, national newspapers, and of Yemen's National Information Center of the Presidential Office. Other sources include interviews with Yemeni historians, sociologists, political scientists and journalists.

6.3 The Formation of the Northern Yemeni Military: Training Missions and the Infiltration of Political Ideologies

Prior to the Northern revolution of September 1962, the Yemeni military establishment passed through two main phases of formation[89], the first was during the reign of Imam Yahya (1905-48), and the second during the time of Imam Ahmed, Yahya's son (1948-62). The first phase began at the end of the First World War, when in 1918 Imam Yahya entered Sana'a to announce the independence of Yemen, and to proclaim himself as the ruler and the Commander of the Faithful. Locked in his isolated theocratic kingdom, surrounded by many decentralized tribal forces, and by the British forces in Aden and the expansionist Saudis. Imam Yahya realized the importance of a central army capable of confronting these internal and external threats. Yahya's poorly organized and poorly trained army of tribesmen was in no position to carry out tasks beyond collecting taxes and maintaining peace among the Zaydi tribes of the north.

From Sana'a, Yahya announced, therefore, the opening of the door for the men of Yemen to join a regular army. Few thousands were recruited; they were the core of Yemen's new army. Most of them were tribesmen who fought with the Imam against the Ottomans (Daghr, 2008), and a few hundred Turkish officers and soldiers who accepted the offer of the Imam to remain in Yemen for training the newly established regular army. The Moroccan traveler, Mohamed Al-Basiqi, who published his Yemen

travel experiences in the Egyptian Al-Ahram newspaper in the mid-1920s, provided one interesting description of the new army. In his column, "The Moroccan Tourist," he notes that the prime reason for the educational backwardness of Yemen was due to the Imam's total preoccupation with creating "an army trained in military tactics." He continues, “to the advantage of the Imam in this regard were a copious number of men …with the famed Yemeni stamina and the ability to endure hardship and subsist on little food." Al-Basiqi notes that the Imam's soldiers wear no uniforms, but ordinary native costumes, and they are a frightening sight. “Should you encounter a band of them you will find them armed to the teeth, their chests and backs weighed down with ammunition belts. Their heads are bare and their black hair is shoulder-length, such an astounding blend of savagery and order” (Rezk, 2001). Poverty drove many people to join the army of the Imam, which secures at least their daily food rations.

Under the leadership of Turkish officers, this core of a regular Yemeni army received its first primary military training. It is worth noting that these Turkish trainers were heavily influenced by German military techniques. The book of the senior German military instructor of the dying Ottoman Empire, Colmar von der Goltz, had a considerable influence in the Turkish military academy. The book highlights that the military is the most superior institution in society and called for a strong national army that should intervene in politics when necessary (Hashim, 2003).

The fear of the military ideas of the Turkish officers might be one of the reasons why the Imam established a new army parallel to the one trained by the Turkish officers, the so called *Gayesh al-Defa’ah* (army of defense). The Imam as the head of Gayesh al-Defa’ah appointed a Syrian military officer, named Tahseen Pasha, the man behind the idea of having a new army. The idea was to establish an army based on compulsory military services for the physically capable men. It was a successful move,

and thousands of Yemenis received basic military training. Most of those who were enlisted were poor landless farmers. Wealthy and influential families were exempted. This army carried out not only security related duties but also tax collection and governmental post delivery.

The Imam had a third army, the so-called '*Al-Barani*', which is a non-regular military force, comprised of tribesmen from the Zaydi highlands. It was a kind of paramilitary force made of tribal levies. This tribal army was divided into groups, each under the leadership of a sheikh. The latter was given the Turkish military title *a'reef*. From the viewpoint of the Imam, *Al-Barani* army, unlike the other two armies, was a purely traditional Yemeni army that could act as a buffer against the regular and defense armies, and create a balance in the newly established military institutions. The tribal army had a different system than that of the two new military institutions. For example, every solider in the *Barani* army should stay in service for one or two years, and be replaced by one of his family members. All members of this army were obliged to be always in a state of war, ready for action any time. Each tribesman in this army was paid four Riyals/month, out of which one Riyal goes to the Sheikh (Dagher, 2008).

In addition to the three mentioned armies, the Imam had about two battalions of guards. They were known as *al-Eekfa'ah*, charged with providing personal protection to the Imam, and carrying out military expeditions and weekly parades. They were the elite of the Imam's army. This retro look at the first phase in the formation of the military in Yemen reveals that the politically motivated creation of overlapping chains of military institutions in the Middle East is not a new tradition introduced by the post independence military elites.

The repeated defeats of the Imam's regular army in the border conflicts with the British in the South, and over Nagran and Asir province with Ibn Saud in the North

made the Imam think about sending some of his military officers abroad to acquire new military knowledge. He looked to Iraq for help, the country with which he signed, in 1931, a brotherhood and friendship treaty (Al-Amry, 1997). In 1935, the Imam sent the first group of cadets to Baghdad Military Academy. The Imam selected those sent for training personally. They were Zaydis, mostly in their teens, urban, non-Sayyid, lowly birth, and with no roots in big tribal families. In fact, many of them studied at the orphan's school. The selection criteria reflect the Imam's concern to choose a group of harmless and loyal youths who would pose no threat to him (Ingrams, 1963). The Imam's calculations proved wrong, for among those who joined the first mission (1935-37) was Abdullah al-Sallal, the son of a blacksmith, who in 1962 led the revolution that brought an end to the Imamate system. Among the members of the second group sent to Baghdad (1936-39), on the other hand, was al-Thulaya, the leader of the 1955 failed coup.

In Baghdad, these Yemeni cadets learned not only new technological and organizational military ideas, but also new political ideas about constitutions and republican government. They have also noted the extreme underdevelopment of their country, and the backwardness of the Imamate system. In recalling the conversations, which he had with his Iraqi military colleagues during his two years training mission in Baghdad, Abdullah al-Sallal was quoted saying:

"We talked about Arabism and the future of the Arab struggle. And I was thinking while listening to these discussions about my country…which was ruled by despotism, in ignorance, backwardness and underdevelopment. Hope began to stir in my chest…Why don't we spread the call for progress when we return to Yemen" (Luqman, 2006).

On the 7th of September 1937, the first group returned to Yemen. The Imam received them and a big crowed of people. The Imam's insecurity and suspicion, however, made him avoid appointing any of the trained cadets in sensitive or important positions within the military. The 1936 military coup of General Bakr Sedqi in Iraq, which was the first military coup in the Arab world, increased the fear of the Imam from the influence of these developments on the Yemeni cadets during their stay in Baghdad. As a preventive measure, he ordered the termination of sending further cadets to Iraq, and requested the Iraqi government to send a military training mission to Yemen, so that the activities of the trainers and the cadets can be under his eyes. Again, the Imam's calculations were wrong. Among the Iraqi military instructors was Jamal Jamil, one of the leading figures in the 1948 failed coup, known as the Coup of Constitutional Movement. In this coup, which was a civil-military coordinated action, Imam Yahya was assassinated, and one of the Sayyids, Abdullah bin Ahmed al Wazir was proclaimed as the leader of the country. The son of Imam Yahya, Prince Ahmed escaped to Hajjah, from where he and his loyal tribal *Barani* army organized a successful countercoup. On the 14th of March 1948, Ahmed entered Sana'a, and all the revolutionaries were executed, including the Iraqi military officer, Jamall Jamil. As a token of reward to his loyal tribal soldiers, the Imam allowed them to loot and pillage Sana'a. Observers of the modern history of Yemen attributed the failure of the 1948 coup to the following two main factors:

1) Weak tribal support. The plotters of the coup, which included urban individuals and groups, collectively known as the Free Yemeni Movement, did not place very much importance on the need to attract the support of the highland Zaydi tribal confederations. 2) Weak and disorganized military. Regular army troops who were mobilized by the Iraqi military instructor, Jamal Jamil, were reduced in number

during the conflict by desertions of the tribal components of the army to their kinsmen beyond the walls of Sana'a (Stookkey, 1978).

The fact that one of the leading figures in the 1948 coup was an Iraqi military instructor, plus the memory of the 1941 military coup in Iraq by nationalist military officers who put a pan-Arab nationalist, Rashid al-Gailani as a Prime Minister, made Imam Ahmed turn his eyes towards non-Arab powers. Italy, the country of his medical treatment trips and with whom his father had signed a friendship treaty in 1926, was the first country he asked for assistance in improving the limited equipment capacity of his army. Italy provided six tanks, 2,000 rifles, four anti-air guns, communications gear, and constructed in Yemen a small factory for producing ammunitions and repairing small arms (Daghr, 2008; Aboul- Enein, 2004).

In 1955, another coup attempt took place, led by yet another cadet trained in Iraq, Colonel al-Thulaya. Although it initiated a massive military protest against the Imam, the coup was drawn into unsuccessful conclusion, and military schools were closed down. The 1952 Egyptian revolution and the post 1956 rise of the Nasserism star in the Arabian sky, however, had altered and reshaped the Imam-military relations. In 1957, Egypt responded to the Imam's request to send a military mission to revitalize Yemen's deteriorated military institutions. By approaching Nasser, the Imam thought to give the impression to his people that he was inclined towards reforms and at the same time protect himself from being engulfed by the strong wave of Nasserism. The Egyptian military mission arrived in Yemen carrying a gift from Nasser - a cargo of weapons (Al-Bidani, 2008). In a period of months, the mission established a number of training centers and military schools. But the marriage of suspicion and fear from outside military trainers in the mind of the Imam hampered the efforts of the Egyptian instructors. However, it did not take long for the Yemeni cadets trained at the hands of

Egyptian officers to be influenced by the spirit of Nasser revolution and by the rising ideology of pan Arab nationalism. Secret cells started to flourish inside the Yemeni military, among them a group called itself the Yemeni Free Officers. Three of these officers plotted the assassination of Imam Ahmed in Hodeidah. The officers were later executed, and Imam Ahmed died of his wounds on the 19th of September 1962 - eighteen months after the assassination attempt. The influence of political ideologies of the Egyptian officers on Yemeni officers reached the apex seven days after the death of Imam Ahmed, when army tanks rumbled into Sana'a to bring an end to the ten centuries-old Imamate system. The Iraqi trained cadet, and Nasser admirer; Abdullah al-Sallal was installed as the President of the new republic.

6.3.1 September Revolution: Officers and the Creation of a Tribal Republic

The onset, escalation and de-escalation of the long post-revolution civil war determined that modern Yemen would be a tribal republic. The midwife of such a republic is Yemen's domestic political arena, which is dominated by powerful tribal leaders and an arrested state. The latter refers to a state that is severely limited in terms of its ability to exercise power and authority. According to Burrowes (2008), this condition of arrested statehood in Yemen is both "cause and effect of the predominantly tribal-military regime that remains firmly in place today". This arrested statehood made it easy for external powers, mainly, Saudi Arabia, to penetrate the socio-political structure of post-revolution Yemen and to turn Yemen into a neo-tribal state.

Most observers of modern Yemen agree that without the heavy Egyptian military support to the republican officers, Yemen's revolution could have ended as a failed military coup similar to the ones that took place in 1948 and 1955. The failure of these coup attempts, despite the assassination of the Imam, is a testimony to the fact that

traditional tribal forces were stronger than modern forces in the military. From the first days in the republican revolution, it was clear that the military was weak and disorganized. For instance, the total military force of the republican revolution was made of 13 tanks, six armored vehicles, two mobile artillery cannons, and two anti-air guns. Amazingly, every tank had only five rounds.

In addition to military and organizational weakness, there was a wide gap between the political ideas espoused by the republican officers and the particularities of Yemen's society, which is fiercely tribal, decentralized and deeply steeped in tradition. Reading the first communiqué and the objectives of the revolution reflects such a gap. The communiqué and the objectives were clearly an extension of the principals of the Egyptian Free Officers. In other words, the republican officers attempted to literally duplicate Egypt's revolution, without taking into consideration the vast socio-cultural, historical, geographical, economic, demographic and political differences between Egypt and Yemen. At the economic front, for example, the communiqué stressed the firm commitment of the new revolution to the promotion of national capital and the prevention of the monopoly of capital. These economic principals were completely out of place in Yemen, they were issues of concern to Egypt and Egyptians, not to Yemen and Yemenis. Yemen at the time of the revolution had nothing called national capital and monopoly of capital.

Unlike other Free Officers in the Arab world, the Yemeni ones had neither a powerful military institution to rely upon nor social classes to mobilize nor Grand National projects of land reform, industrialization and political mobilization. Following the departure of the Egyptian forces in 1967, a sheikhs-military led coup took place, on the 5th of November, which ousted al-Sallal and replaced him with Qadi al-Iryani, the only non-military ruler of Yemen since the revolution. According to an old western

watcher of Yemen, this coup marked the end of the Egyptian influence on the events in North Yemen (Halliday, 2000). During the period of President al-Iryani's government (1967-74), tribal penetration of all state structures, including the military, reached an apex, hence the name given to that period: the 'republic of sheikhs' (Al Zeeb, 2005). However, the conciliatory nature of Iryani's government, which according to Peterson (1984), was seeking to reconstruct the Imamate system without the figure of the Imam, was doomed to failure. On the 13th of June 1974, Colonel Ibrahim al-Hamdi led a successful coup, which announced not only the direct re-entry of Yemen's military into the political arena but also a new vision of political and social modernization.

Colonel al-Hamdi was a populist military modernizer, who advocated the centralization of state power, marginalization of tribal and feudal forces and the strengthening of Yemen's independence and sovereignty. Under al-Hamadi, the centralizing momentum appeared, for a while, stronger than ever before in the modern history of Yemen. Al- Hamdi believed that the military was the only national body that was capable of weakening the tribal institution and its symbols of sheikhdom. Reorganizing and equipping the military and weakening the Saudi political influence on the northern tribes were Hamdi's top priority. Thus, he began removing influential tribal elements inside the army and state structure, including the paramount sheikh Aduallah Al-Ahmar, and forming closer relations with the PDRY. However, in his pursuit of building a strong central state in the YAR, al-Hamdi was constrained by his heavy dependence on the Saudi financial aid, which included, among others, helping out Sana'a government to pay the armed forces personnel. The YAR's financial reliance on the Saudi aid forced Al-Hamdi, therefore, to waver between a Saudi orientation and a rapprochement with the PDRY. For example, in exchange for the continuity of the aid, and a freer hand in dealing with northern tribal forces, Colonel al-Hamdi dismissed a

number of ministers in his government of whom the Saudi disapproved and announced the freezing of relations with the Soviet Union and the Communist Camp (Walt, 1990; Lapidoth, 1982). However, at the height of his good relations with the Saudis, al-Hamdi, in 1976, paid a visit to Peking and signed an agreement for technical and economic development cooperation (Safran, 1988), and he continued to maintain a unity-dialogue with the leadership in the PDRY. In light of the increasing Soviet military support to the PDRY, and in attempt to break the Saudi control over the YAR military dealings[90], al-Hamdi called for a new friendship between Sana'a and Washington. The Americans responded to his call by advising the Saudis that a weak central government in the YAR could be disastrous for the security of the region, and therefore, the Saudi government should provide their generous support to al-Hamdi regime, and swiftly act to bolster his armed forces. In February 1976, a trilateral agreement -YAR, the US and the Saudis - to provide al Hamdi with a large military package of modern US arms to counterbalance the growing Soviet military support to the PDRY was signed in Riyadh. However, on the basis of the traditional Saudi policy that north Yemen should never be too strong, the Saudis feared that strengthening the military of the charismatic Hamdi might pose a future threat and they were reluctant, therefore, to implement the agreement. Instead, the Saudis opted to tame the PDRY. On the 10th of March 1976, Aden and Riyadh announced their intention to normalize their relations and to create an environment of mutual understanding that serves the causes of both countries and those of the region. The broadcasted Aden-Riyadh communiqué emphasized the desire of the two entities to cooperate on the basis of 'good neighborliness', 'unity of destiny' and 'non-interference' in the internal affairs of each other. In addition to acute domestic economic and political problems, the leadership in the PDRY was pushed towards cooperation with the Saudi kingdom because of its

concern over the growing activities of the Iranian navy in the Arabian Sea, and the military presence of Iranian troops in Oman (Al-Madhagi, 1996; Safran, 1988). The positive change in Riyadh-Aden relationships provided the Saudis with the excuse to argue with Washington that the tension with the PDRY has been diffused, thus the US military package to Sana'a was not needed. These developments made it clear to Hamdi that the Saudis were not willing to support him in his efforts to reorganize and equip his military as a means to establish his central authority over the armed to the teeth tribes in the highlands. During the night of 12th October 1977, al-Hamdi was killed, a few hours before he was scheduled to visit the PDRY to announce a new step towards the unification of the two Yemens.

Following the announcement of al-Hamdi's murder, army units took control of strategic buildings and main streets of Sana'a while political power passed to yet another colonel, al-Ghashmi. The three years of Colonel Al Hamdi reflected in a very clear manner how the Saudis used the YAR to undermine the PDRY, and used the PDRY and northern tribes to prevent the consolidation of a strong central authority in the YAR. In this sense, the Saudi Royal Family has acted in each of the Yemens through the other Yemen.

Despite the pro-tribal and pro-Saudi policies of al-Hamdi's successors, Colonel al-Ghasmi (1977-78) and Salih (1978-today), the Saudi policy toward the reorganization of Yemen's military did not change. In fact, Yemen's army became even weaker than it was during al-Hamdi (Al-Madhagi, 1996). Since the birth of the revolution, the Saudis were determined to keep Yemen as a tribal republic with a weak military that lacked an institutional face, and a strong tribal structure that dominated the political system and the military. Robert Burrowes (1987) concludes that one of most important outcomes of this post Hamdi Saudi-sponsored policy is the extensive tribalization of the military,

which made north Yemen's armed forces "the linchpin of the system of tribal power" (Burrowes, 1987).

In short, in post revolutionary north Yemen, the military at its top levels has turned into a base for tribal power, while at its lower levels; it has turned into an area for recruiting tribesmen as a part of the regime's politics of survival and co-optation. Compared to all state institutions, the military in north Yemen is the major employer in a country where unemployment rates exceeds 35 percent.

6.3.2 The Formation and Role of the Military in Marxist South Yemen

While the officers in the North carried out a fragile military coup that was saved only by the 70,000 Egyptian troops, in the South, however, the post-independence regime replaced the old British-established army with a new national military. The objective of this move was the destruction of the old colonial state structure before building a new socialist state. One of the distinguishing features of the PDRY political system is the absence of not only structural continuity within any section of the state apparatus but also absence of personal continuity in the pre-post independence state. This is due to the fact that in addition to colonial and pro-colonial officials and administrators, western companies and foreign civil servants, many of the top military officers fled the country after independence. Compared to all Arab republics, the ideological foundations of the new state have gone beyond nationalist revolution to a social revolution, and thus the form of the state's political, economic and social skeletons was designed in such a way that it represents the interests of the oppressed classes within the South Yemeni society. What was the impact of such foundations and skeletons on civil-military relations in the PDRY?

In Feb.1978, Ali al-Bid, the Minister of Defense in Socialist Yemen, upon his return from his first official visit to Moscow, ordered the dismissal of the British technicians serving with the armed forces (Halliday, 2002). One month later, the 1st Soviet military delegation paid a visit to the PDRY. In the years to follow, South Yemen turned into a Soviet satellite on the Red Sea. The harbor of Aden, for example, became a submarine facility for the Soviets, and was receiving regular Russian military shipments to the army of the PDRY. In addition to the 800 to 1,000 Soviet advisers, there were also about 600 Cuban advisers, and more than one hundred East Germans. The latter were mainly recruited inside the internal security intelligence (Dresch, 2000). By the year 1983, the size of armed forces in the PDRY was estimated to be 25,500, in addition to a popular militia of 30,000 (McNaugherr, 1985). The veterans of guerrilla struggle led both the armed forces and the militia. About 60% of the members of the popular militia were peasants and 30% workers. They were all trained for 20 days a year, and were paid for this period (Halliday, 1979). The organizational structure of the army and the marching of the PDRY's political elites in the road of socialism made the military play a less important role in the political life than in other Arab political entities. However, civil-military relations in South Yemen were negatively affected by the factional disputes within the civilian political apparatuses. These factions have their roots in the four groups involved in the anti-colonial struggle: Popular Socialist Party, Sons of Southern Arabia, National Union Party and Nationalist Front. Inter-groups disputes had their continuous reflections inside the armed forces. For instance, one of the explosive issues in the 1969 and 1978 intra-ruling party disputes was regarding the demotion and promotion of military officers (Halliday, 1979). The new progressive Arab Marxist-Leninist republic of South Yemen has been beset by factional strife, although, from a traditional Marxist perspective, such strife should not exist in socialist

states. The most fatal of factional infighting in the Arab world's lone 'proletarian' revolution was the horrific events of the 13th of January 1986, in which President Ali Nasser's bodyguards opened fire on a rival faction in the politburo, prompting a bloody coup d'état of civil-war proportions in which thousands of people were killed, including 55 senior party figures. Ali Nasser prepared for the murdering of his opponents by issuing leaflets in advance of the politburo meeting, claiming success in defeating an alleged attempted coup. *Ahdath Jana'yir*, or January events, exposed the regional cleavages and tribal rivalries, which members of the ruling elite have injected inside the military. During the events, different military units took different sides. For example, the navy backed Ismail's group, and started firing into the streets of Aden and government buildings. The Soviet military advisors, on the other hand, refused to provide either side with weapons and munitions (Cordesman, 1993). As a result, Ali Nasser flew to Ethiopia and asked Mengistu to rush in added arms and troops, but his request was denied. He was forced, therefore, to flee to the YAR, requesting asylum.

The roots of January's events are traced in the divided leadership in the post 1967 British withdrawal from Aden. One year before the withdrawal, the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen looked for a time as the most likely anti-colonial movement to establish itself as the successor to the British. It was, however, the National Liberation Front (NLF), that took over in November 1967. In less than a year, splits within the NLF prompted a 'corrective movement', which led to the exile of the PDRY's first president to Egypt. Conflicts within the NLF[91] continued, resulting in the killing of the 2nd PDRY head of state, President Salmayn in 1978, and the exile to Moscow of the third head of state, Abdul Fattah Ismail, in April 1980. Power struggles expanded when the pragmatic Ali Nasr Muhammad replaced Ismail. His pragmatism regarding, for example, the relations with neighboring countries, economic affairs, his

performing of *umrah* in Mecca, and attending an Islamic summit, put him in a clash with a group of hard-liners in the party. The clash was intensified when hard-liners succeeded in engineering the return of Ismail in February 1985, to be appointed as the secretary of the ruling party. January events were, therefore, the culmination of a long and complex factional strife inside the PDRY. Despite the claim of the ruling party that their Socialism and Communism-based mode of governance prevents military interference in civil politics and that politics is supreme to military action, the role of the military in January events exposed the politicization of the PDRY's armed forces. Although the history of Marxist-Leninist systems illustrates that their militaries were also politicized institutions, there has never been, however, a case in these systems where the military has overthrown the party by coup d'état. Al Faqih (2007), in an interview with the author, argued that the bloody factional strife in South Yemen resulted not only in the weakening of the PDRY's army and the ruling elite, which subsequently paved the road for the unification of the PDRY and the YAR, but also to the Northerners' victory over the South, militarily, politically and ideologically.

6.4 The Military of Unified Yemen

How to merge the two separate and very different military apparatuses of the YAR and PDRY? This was one of the most critical questions that Salih and al-Bayed had to find an answer for it in order to make the North-South unity come true. At the time of unification, the northern army had the advantage of having a larger number of troops, more than 37000, and in terms of number of tanks, 664. The southern army had 27000 men and 480 tanks, but it had a superior air force, both in terms of skills and number of air fighters.

As a symbol of their unity, southern military units moved into northern governorates, and northern units moved into the southern ones, and the first minister of defence in united Yemen was Haithem Taher, a southerner who served as the former chief of armed forces in the PDRY. This appointment was meant to reduce the worries of the southerners. On the ground, however, suspicion and mutual distrust were such that both sides were reluctant to cede their control over their armies. For example, the artillery unit, which was positioned in Sana'a, was put under the leadership of one of Salih's relatives. The 5000 Iraqi-trained republican guards and the air force, on the other hand, remained under the direct control of Salih and his close relatives. Since 1991, the republican guards were among the disputed issues between the GPC and YSP. The GPC demanded that the republican guards should be directly linked to the president, while the YSP demanded that these units should be under the direct responsibility of the minister of defense, in order to avoid the split of the army into multi forces.

In the first three years of unification, political disputes between the northern and southern political elites continued to cast its reflection inside the military of united Yemen, resulting in the creation of multi-command structures and loyalties, and hostility among the northern-southern officers. In July 1993, General al-Bashiri, a Northerner and the Chief of Armed Staff, submitted his resignation in protest at the Southern minister of defence. The resigned General cited the dubious nature of the promotion of thousands of southern officers, and the authoritarian leadership style of the southern minister as the motivating factors behind his resignation. The situation inside the military of united Yemen gave the impression that elites-promoted political pluralism has turned into armed pluralism, which increased the possibility of violent northern-southern conflict.

In an attempt at diffusing the conflict over the military, Salih and al-Bayad signed an agreement in Amman, on the 20th of January, 1994, in the presence of late King Hussein of Jordan and the Secretary General of the Arab League, the so called 'The Document of Promise and Agreement' (DPA). According to the agreement, the military should serve as the best reflection of Yemen's unification. The document emphasized the limiting of the political role of the military, the bringing of armed forces under the direct control of a central unified government, and the banning of the formation of any organized armed forces or militia outside the scope of government control. The DPA called for re-organizing united Yemen's military into only three forces - infantry, navy and air force - and the prohibition of the establishment of any armed unit outside these three forces. Furthermore, senior officers in the military and security apparatus should not remain in their positions for a period of more than 5 years, and the army should distance itself from partisan, political, regional sectarian or familial affiliations. Amman's agreement reflected the concerns of the leadership in the South regarding Salih's influence in the army, through his family and tribal links.

The agreement also prohibits the presence of more than one senior military officer with family relations to the president, vice president, prime minister, deputies of prime minister, minister of defence, minister of inferior and chief of armed staff. In case more than one head of a military unit have family relations, others should be sent to early retirement, given a civilian post or retire before the re-organization of the military takes place. The agreement had a short life, a few months later, on the 5th of May 1994; the war of succession took place. In the war, northern and southern armed forces were positioned in each other governorates and hit many of each other's most important economic cornerstones- airports, ports, power stations and oil facilities - vital to the post Gulf War bruised economy.

In the war of succession, Salih's tightly sealed family-tribal based military commanding structure proved to be one of the major factors behind the victory of the Northern army. Other factors include the following: 1) legitimacy: North Yemen forces were fighting to protect and keep the unity of Yemen. 2) Popular support: unlike in the South, where people had lost the trust of their leadership, the Northern forces had a massive support from most of the Yemenis, even in southern governorates. In the south, on the other hand, many residents refused to enlist in the army and there are reports that people in southern governorates even guided the Northern forces to the hideouts, camps and ambushes of the southern army. 3) The low morale of the southern troops. For example, during the war on one single day (October the 14th) the Madram, the 56th Infantry, the 122nd Mechanized, the 22nd Infantry, the 4th Artillery camps, as well as the rocket base in Shabwah, all defected and joined the northern forces. Remarkably, in *al-Daleh* and *Al-Eend* regions, southern army units put up much resistance, simply because most of the troops in these units have their roots in the same areas. In other words, these troops fought as local militia not as a national army. 4) Buying allegiance: according to al-Saqqaf (1994), millions were paid out to unit commanders and officers in the southern army to facilitate the advance of Northern forces. 5) The divided leadership in the YSP. 6) The lack of support from the tribes in the south, which is an expected reaction from a segment that has been mocked and suppressed by the southern political elites. 7) Finally, Salih's utilization of Islamist fighters, known as the Arab Afghans, who have carried out many successful insurgency-based operations. Worth noting here is that a few months before the war, Sheikh Abdel Majeed Al-Zindani, a prominent radical Yemeni Islamist who has served as a mentor to Osama bin Laden, was granted permission to preach inside north Yemeni military compounds. In a number of his speeches to the troops, Al Zindani attacked the government in the south, accusing

it of being a representation of 'infidel communist separatists'. In one of his speeches inside a northern military unit, Al Zindani considered fighting for keeping Yemen united as *jihad* against those who divide and break the cohesion of the Islamic community.

If the war of succession reflected the violent consequences of the inherent tensions in wedding a socialist system with a tribal-dominated one, the northern victory in the war, on the other hand, has reflected the regime's orchestrated growing power of tribal-Islamist orientations inside the military of united Yemen.

6. 5 Sheikhs and Officers in United Yemen: The Mixture of *Assabiyah* and Shilla

The Yemeni contest between a weak state centre and a fragmented armed tribal periphery produces a situation that allows tribal sheikhs to acquire political power far beyond the boundaries of their tribes (Peterson, 1984). Since the 1970s, the political role of tribal sheikhs in Yemen has been institutionalized. Instead of being representatives of their tribes to the state, tribal sheikhs of Yemen have become representatives of the state to their tribes. It is worth noting here that there are two types of tribal sheikhs who are currently integrated into the regime's web of patronage. The first, and most influential in the political-military scene are the so-called blood ties and lineage-based sheikhs, or *Shuyukh Addam*. This type is dominant in the Zaydi dominated mountainous regions of north Yemen and differs from the territorial-based sheikhs, or *Shuyukh Al-Ard.* The latter are feudal lords, found in agricultural plains of Yemen, and who have their tribes-folk work in their lands as farmers in return for food and shelter.

Comparing their role during the Imamate system with the one since the establishment of the republic reveals how Yemen's tribal sheikhs have been

transformed from being the armed wings of the political system to being s professional political elite who support political office holders in return for benefits. As mediators between the central government and their tribesmen, sheikhs were absorbed into Yemen's post-revolution neo-tribal state, which is founded on personal and kinship relations, and the loyalties that these inform. In this regard, Philips (2008) argues that sheikhs are "easily targeted points of co-optation", which gives the opportunity to the weak Yemeni state to push its agenda outside Sana'a without carrying out state building efforts in the rural areas (Philips, 2008).

The current regime of Salih is one of the most active post- revolution regimes in adopting the policy of institutionalizing the political authority of sheikhs, and in linking them to the center through a patronage system. The form of the patronage varies from monthly payment distributed by the Department of Tribal Affairs, to gifts such as business deals, vehicles and houses. In his Yemen Chronicle (2005), anthropologist Steven Caton, records his observations about the changes that took place, after his twenty-year absence from Yemen, regarding the status of tribal sheikhs: "The charisma of these sheikhs was apparent in their faces, in their bearing, in the circumspect way their followers approached them or disengaged from them, all of which I had noticed about them twenty years before; what was different was their newfound wealth, resulting from government subsidy and capital accumulation, evident in their big cars, expensive guns, and many retainers" (Caton, 2005).

One of the important sources of tribal sheikhe' power has been established as a result of the infiltration of the sheikh into the military structure. In united Yemen, a military-tribal complex of patron-client relationships fills the gaps between state and non-state power. From this complex, politically relevant sheikhs and high-ranking officers draw considerable benefits. In fact, the complexity of united Yemen's reality

defies the separation of the military, tribal, political and economic elites in all trajectories. In united Yemen, one may find a tribal sheikh who is a party persona and a businessman; or a high-ranking military officer who is a tribal sheikh and a merchant, all at the same time. The al-Ahmars are the most obvious example. Hamid, for instance, one of the sons of the late Sheikh Abduallah Al Ahmar, is an influential tribal leader, a member of the parliament, and the Chairman of Al-Ahmard Group, which has commercial activities that cover, amongst others, the import of military, police and air force outgear, crude oil and natural gas, communication, investment, and the import of food products and construction materials[92]. It must be noted, however, that merchants are not terribly influential in the Yemeni government unless they are bolstered by tribal and/or military status. In other words, the influence they derive from their business activities is usually a function of the influence that they derive from their tribal/military status. For instance, many urban businessmen without tribal backing or military background often add to their business cards the title of "sheikh" to gain prestige and influence. According to Al-Zaheri, this phenomenon is encouraged by the regime's attempt to breed sheikhs. Such breeding has the objective of fomenting disputes between the real and original sheikhs and the regime-manufactured ones.

One of the useful approaches that can clearly reflect the dialectical and complex interactions between military officers, tribe and tribalism in the ROY is examining the backgrounds of Salih and the core nucleus of his regime. Salih was born on the 21st of March 1942 into a humble family within the unimportant Sanhan section of Bayt al-Ahmar of Hashid Tribe. As a teenager, Salih joined the Imam's tribal army as a private solider. In 1960, at the age of 18, he left his tribe and the tribal army to join Sana'a officers' training school. Two years later, he participated, as a sergeant, in the anti-imamate 26th September revolution and was promoted to adjutant military officer.

During the civil war, he joined the school for armored troops, where he was trained at the hands of Egyptian military trainers, and later promoted to the position of the commanding officer of an armored battalion in Bab al-Mandab sector. Salih's military career profited from the post civil war climate, which secured him a commission through the now influential Hashid patrons, as the commanding officer of the important Ta'izz military battalion. One of the most important tribal patrons of Salih during his military service in Ta'izz was Colonel Ahmad Husayn al-Ghashmi, who was destined, because of Hashid's support, to become the army's chief-of-staff and, briefly in 1977-1978, the Yemeni Arab Republic's president. Al-Ghashmi had his tribal roots in Hamdan Sana'a section of Hashid, a section that was geographically close to the Sanhan tribal section of Salih. As an al-Ghashmi protégé, Ali Abdullah Salih Al-Ahmar's military and political stars rose steadily. In 1978, Salih was appointed as a Member of the Provisional Presidential Council and Vice-General Commander and Chief of Staff of the Armored Forces. This appointment was a reward for his effective role in the 1974 military-tribal organized coup that ended al-Hamdi's life and era. Following the assassination of President Al-Ghashmi, Salih took over the presidential office. It is worth noting here that before and after the assassination of al-Hamdi, Salih and Al-Ghashmi worked together to diminish the influence of al-Hamdi and his reformist colleagues in the military, and to consolidate their own positions by enlisting and promoting soldiers and officers from their own tribal sections in Hashid.

Studying the background of the members of Salih's regime, on the other hand, reveals how such a web-like structure is distinguished by its familial-tribal colonization of the military. In the ROY, the military is the mirror of Salih's political authority and survival, which rest on three concentric circles of loyalty: Salih's relatives, members of

his clan, *Sanhan*, and of his tribe, *Hashid*. The following list of high ranking military officers and their positions exposes such a web:

1-Brigaider General Mohammed Salih Al-Ahmar, Commander of the Air Force. (Half Brother of Salih)

2-Brigaider General Ali Saleh Al-Ahmar, Chief of Staff of the General Command. (Half Brother of Salih)

3- Brigadier General Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar, Commander of the First Tank Division, Commander of the North Western Military Zone. (Half Brother of Salih)

4- Colonel Ahmed Ali Abdullah Salih, Commander of the Republican Guards, Commander of the Special Forces. (Son of Saleh).

5-Colonel Yahya Mohamed Abdullah Salih, Commander of the Central Security Forces. (Son of Salih's brother).

6-Colonel Tareq Mohammed Abdullah Salih, Commander of the Special Guards. (Son of Salih's brother)

7- Colonel Ammar Mohammed Abdullah Salih, Chairman of the National Security. (Son of Salih's brother)

8-Brigaider General Salih Al-Dhaneen, Commander of Khaled Forces. (Sanhan section-Hashid)

9-Brigaider General Mehdi Makwala, Commander of the Southern Military Zone. (Sanhan section-Hashid)

10-Brigaider General Mohammed Ali Mohsen, Commander of the Eastern Military Zone. (Sanhan section-Hashid)

This list shows strong evidence of the civil-military problematique in the tribal republic of Yemen. At the heart of this problematique lies the paradox of strengthening the military so that it can protect and enforce the will of the weak polity, but at the same

time preventing the military from becoming a threat to the weak polity. This family-Sanhanian structure resembles in many ways the Iraqi fashion of control put into practice during Saddam's era. However, there are a number of major differences between Salih and Saddam's patterns of political and military control. To begin with, the Yemeni tribes are far more powerful than the Iraqi ones and have always played a crucial political role. In addition, unlike in Iraq of Saddam, Yemen's military is composed mainly of tribesmen. This means that the feeling of sympathy for tribal traditions inside Yemen's military is, at least, as equal to their sympathy for their military traditions. Unlike Saddam, Salih does not and cannot exert ultimate authority and control across his country. In addition to topographical and oil-wealth related factors, Salih's inability to exercise ultimate authority is related to the fragmented and autonomous tribal nature of Yemen's society. This fragmentation at society level is compounded by the weakness of institutions at state level. As a result, Salih and Yemen's core elite cannot enforce their will without the participation of tribal forces. Another major difference is the absence in Yemen of a strong ideological party like the Iraqi Ba'th. As Saddam Hussein once put it "With party methods, there is no chance for anyone who disagrees with us to jump on a couple of tanks and overthrow the government" (Hirst, 1971). Finally, unlike in Iraq, the military in Yemen is not a vehicle of new middle class, which, according to the classic view of modernization, can substitute for the weak bourgeoisie. Instead, the Yemeni military fits, to a large degree, the new Mamluks model, but with a much lesser degree of repression.

CONCLUSIONS

For centuries, religious institutions and theocratic authority produced the ruling elites of Yemen, who adopted conservatism and isolationism. However, Imam Yahya's efforts in building a military establishment in the North and the colonial British-made army in the South have created the first nucleus of a new type of ruling elites - the military officers, who joined the tribal institution in the process of manufacturing elites. The historical review and analysis in the previous chapter illustrated the following:

First, tribal-military mindset dominated the modern political history of the Yemeni state. At the heart of this mindset lies the Zaydi principal that there could be many claimants to the seat of the Imam. As a result, oaths of tribal allegiance were withdrawn from one claimant and given to another. Throughout the modern political history of Yemen, tribes and groups frequently contested the very nature of the Imam's moral authority. As a result, the Imam had to depend on troops to keep his domain of obedience.

Second, the principle limitation to the power of any central authority in Yemen throughout its modern history has been its military weakness in comparison to the armed strength of the tribes. Yemeni leaders have traditionally relied on the tribes to provide them with the forces required to impose and maintain their authority over the country. As a consequence, the process of mobilizing military support has necessitated the development of an important element of consent in the relationship between the 'tribe' and state. Today, the military in Yemen continue to lack the institutional face and the coherent ideology to legitimize its rule and attract support from the masses.

Third, tribal leaders and their men penetrated the military and occupied strategic positions inside the military; cementing the tribe and military links. Fourth, the penetration of political ideologies into the military of Yemen looked very different from

the typical political penetration model in other Arab tribal republics - Iraq of Saddam and Libya of Qaddafi. In these two republics, regimes created politicized and ideological armies in order to ensure the military's non-involvement in the political process. This approach follows Mao-Tse-Tung's assertion that "the party controls the gun and the gun shall never be allowed to command the party" (Nordlinger, 1977), and Michel Aflaq's belief that "There is no real revolutionary party in the world whose leaders are military men continuing to command army units" (Hashim, 2003).

Fifth, the military in Yemen is not the production of the tribe. Instead, it is a reflection of the complexity and hegemony of coalitions on the Zaydi high mountains. All the five presidents of North Yemen were Zaydis, four of them with military backgrounds, two of them were assassinated, and two were forced to abdicate and seek asylum abroad.

Sixth, studying civil-military relations in Yemen provides a window not only into the paramount importance of the Saudi role in shaping such relations, but also into Yemen's unstable political life and how such instability has, as Lisa Weeden (2008) put it, "compromised whatever loyalty might have existed for either fledgling nation-state". For example, the various coups and the participation of the military in the internal fighting among party officials in the South sapped many Yemenis' confidence about the possibilities for a successful Marxist-Leninist nation-state there. In the North, on the other hand, the civil wars, political assassinations and overall instability also undercut potential allegiances to a specifically Northern nation-state. Finally, the Yemeni case of civil-military relations demonstrates clearly that as well as the regime's politics of survival; structural economic and regional factors are at the heart of the failure of Yemen's military in performing its task as a modernizing agent.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THESIS CONCLUSION

During the last four decades, Yemen's political community has experienced an ancient theocratic imamate, a British Crown Colony, seventeen emirates, four sultanates, a federation, a conservative tribal republic, a Marxist republic and a united republic. It is indeed remarkable that a single country could have emerged and survived despite all these accumulated disparate entities, in such a short period of time. This research has tried to present the Yemeni case of political modernization within its particular historical, socio-cultural, economic and political contexts.

The research demonstrates how the Yemeni PPM has been strongly shaped by the ebbs and flows in the local, national, regional and international conditions. My aim has been to explore these conditions that have accompanied the experiments of the Yemeni political community and to relate them to our theoretical understanding of the PPM. Exploring the political history of pre and post revolutionary Yemen reveals in a clear manner how over the course of the last century, political life in Yemen has always been marred by turmoil, violence, instability, state weakness and constant and direct external penetration. As a result, the most persistent logic that guided and continues to guide the operations of politics in Yemen is the pursuit of survival strategies, even if survival strategies mean radical shifts in posture and policy. The adoption of such strategies has resulted in disrupting and deforming the PPM, in both former North and South Yemen and united Yemen. In fact, even in colonial Aden, the British-designed political modernization project was deformed. For example, while the colonial administration recognized the social and economic rights of women, it did not recognize, however, women's rights in political participation. Only male candidates for the Legislative Council were allowed. Furthermore, the British administration put restrictive conditions regarding male candidates, which included, amongst others, that

the candidate should have been born in Aden, owns commercial and/or residential properties, or has weekly earnings of at least more than seven pounds throughout the last twelve months before the election (Al-Shargabi, 2006). In pre-revolutionary North Yemen, on the other hand, the PPM was couched in theocratic terms and isolationism-based authoritarian tendencies.

The case of Yemen demonstrates that the key to political modernization is not 'culture' or 'religion'. Instead, the key is state institutions and geopolitics. One of the most obvious differences between the former two post-revolutionary Yemens is the type of state institutions building projects they attempted to implement. In the PDRY, the Marxism-inspired political program demanded not only extensive land reform and the redistribution of property, but also the radical transformation of the traditional Yemeni society into a liberal and secular one. The efforts of the political system in the PDRY to relegate Islam to the private sphere led to the reconfiguration of the meaning, deployment and institutionalization of religion. These efforts were a part of the PDRY's secularism-based political modernization project, which was implemented not simply by relying on legislated codes borrowed from a Marxist modernization framework, but on new regulatory state institutions that regulate and monitor the implementation of the new legislated codes. In former North Yemen, however, no efforts were made to build new regularity state institutions since the regime repositioned Islamic law, converted old religious manuals to new legislated codes (Messick, 1993), and allowed, for the sake of avoiding state-tribe clash, the unlimited practice of tribal laws and codes.

Although the 26th of September 1962 anti-theocratic revolution in North Yemen, and the 30th of November 1967 independence of South Yemen have created the opportunity for establishing two modern political systems for carrying out the project of nation-state building, the geopolitical intersection of national, regional and international

factors, however, prevented the evolution of the PPM. At the national level, the regimes in the two systems were infected by the tribalism of the North and regionalism of the South. At the regional level, the hegemonic Saudi factor that dominated, manipulated and shaped the socio-economic and political developments in Yemen, has nourished tribalism and undermined all efforts of centralization of political authority in Yemen. At the international level, on the other hand, the geo-politics of the Cold War has enforced and prolonged the division and hostility between the two Yemens and promoted militarization at the expense of modernization and development. Similarly, the 1990 unification of the two entities and transition to democracy were based on survival strategies and the intersection of the national, regional and international factors.

Analyzing the PPM in united Yemen brings to the surface the pattern of influence, which traditional social and ideological forces enjoy in modern Arab states. However, the Yemeni state is distinguished by being the underdeveloped and fragile Arab state that lacks oil wealth, strategic regional weight, and even the Weberian monopoly over the use of violence but capable of managing a party pluralism-based system, and accommodating all the available ideological shades in the region, e.g. familism, tribalism, Islamism, pan Arabism, sectarianism and Nasserism. At the heart of this capability lies the fact that the ‘accepted’ state weakness made the Yemeni regime prefer to operate cautiously through the integration of all major social and ideological forces that may pose a threat to the delicate balance between the weak state and strong society. So delicate is the balance that the exclusion of any of these forces may lead to the Somalization of Yemen. To re-produce its rule, the Yemeni regime has historically relied on what Lisa Wedeen describes as 'spaces of disorder' (Wedeen, 2010).

Studying the case of Yemen provides students of state-society relations in the Middle East with a long list of particularities. To begin with, compared to all political entities in the Arabian Peninsula, the existing Yemeni state is not the result of a colonial division as in the case of the oil sheikhdoms, nor was it due to ideological expansion as in the case of Saudi Arabia. Instead, it is the outcome of the long armed conflict between the successive Zaydi Imams and the Ottomans in the north, and between the national movement and the British colonization in the south. Compared to the rest of the Arab world, on the other hand, Yemen's society has been the most unstable, the most isolated and most resistant to foreign occupation and influence. Even the Muslim Ottomans who ruled the Middle East for hundreds of years were fiercely resisted in Yemen. One hour drive from Sana'a is the town of *Kawkaban*, where thousands of Turkish troops were killed, hence the local name given to the town '*maqbarat al-attrak*' (the Graveyard of the Turks). Yemen was the Vietnam of the Ottoman Empire, and decades later it became the Vietnam of Egypt. Yemeni tribes, who make the majority of Yemen's population, have a long and continuous history of strong autonomy and stubborn resistance to control. All the attempts made by the Imams, the British, the Ottomans, the Egyptians and republican Yemeni officers, to impose the will of a central authority upon them have failed. In 2008, this tribal position continues to pose a serious challenge to any political modernization effort in the areas of centralization of political authority, expansion of the tax collection system, and the application of state law and order. One of main dilemmas of the PPM in Yemen is that in tribal parts of the country the central government is perceived as a foreign intruder.

As this research demonstrates, even two of the most potent forces of modernization — political parties and the military, have been tribalized, and have turned into two state mechanisms for reproducing the legitimacy of traditional forces,

and for freezing the ruling elites. Despite the post 1990 united Yemen's transition to democracy, there has been no alteration in the executive since 1978. In 2008, Yemen's political system is still being characterized as semi-authoritarian, where elements of democracy such as free press and civic associations have taken root within a very short time in the authoritarian monarchical setting of the Arabian Peninsula, but at the same time patronage and corruption have infiltrated all the bones of the fragile skeleton of the Yemeni state, and state institutions remain incapable of providing very basic social services to the population.

Today, Yemen is a deeply unstable Middle Eastern political entity, with socio-economic indicators that are amongst the worst in the world. Yemen is of significant geopolitical importance as it is strategically located at the Southern tip of a neighborhood of oil monarchies, and lies at the access point to the vital maritime shortcut of the Suez Canal. Yemen has been resting for decades on a knife's edge, and has been known for a long time as a fertile soil for violence. However, Yemen only appears on the surface of the international media and on the desks of senior western policy makers if its chronic instability is crystallized into a threat to western interests. Once these threats have passed, it sinks deeply and for long periods back into obscurity.

During the 2nd half of 2009, Yemen entered more frequently than usual into the regional and international media as a result of the re-eruption of a radical Shiite insurgency along the Yemeni-Saudi borders. The catalyst for the international media coverage of the Shiite insurgency, however, was the assumption that Yemen is turning into an arena for a proxy war between the Sunni Muslim world led by the U.S. ally Saudi Arabia and the Shiite Muslim world led by the anti-U.S. mullahs of Iran. During the same period, a number of security and policy reports expressed concern that militant

Jihadists fleeing Pakistan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia are making use of Yemen’s three Cs: chaos, corruption and conflicts, and are sheltering and reorganizing themselves in the ungoverned 'dark spaces' in the eastern and northern tribal areas of Yemen. Some strategic reports went even further to explain that Yemen has become not only a breeding ground for insurgent movements, but also a dangerous base that links al-Qaeda's three main theaters of operation in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia.

Alarming statements by Senior Member of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee claim that the U.S. 'no longer have confidence that the Yemeni government has the capacity to assist the U.S.' in providing for the security of the American nation. This statement, and others similar, suggested that Yemen is a new theater for the U.S.-led 'war on terror' encouraged the headquarters of western media outlets to dispatch their war correspondents to the Yemeni capital. The wave of foreign correspondents in Sana'a, the sudden meeting of General David Petraeus, the U.S. regional military commander, with President Salih of Yemen, and the closure of the U.S. and U.K. embassies, created the impression that missiles and bombs of the U.S.-led 'war on terror' shall be soon heard loud and clear in different parts of Yemen. In the context of the current explosive security, political, economic, religious and regional congestions in Yemen, a military-driven anti-terror strategy is more likely to be a recipe for a long destructive civil war with severe regional repercussions, than a method for uprooting terror cells in Yemen. Counter terrorism cannot be achieved by a "destroy-the-village-to-save-it" attitude and actions.

A short-termed U.S. militarized solutions will further open the gates for a flood of global Jihadists, who are not necessarily supportive of Al-Qaeda, but are still volunteering to be candidates for death. On the 14th of January, the Association of

Yemen' Clerics, headed by the Sheikh Abdulmajeed al-Zindan, issued a warning, signed by 150 influential Islamists, that they will call for a holy war in the event that the U.S. invades Yemen. Similar warnings, statements and religious decrees are likely to ripple to other parts of the Muslim world if American ground troops are sent to Yemen. The appearance of these troops on Yemeni soil will substantially swell the ranks of extremist recruits, not only from the Middle East and the Horn of Africa but also from South East Asia and even Europe. Many of these recruits will be more than willing to act as human bombs. A direct U.S. military intervention will also destroy the very delicate balance, which the government of Yemen maintains between its allegiance to the U.S., on the one hand, and the domestic tribal, Islamist and political forces that resent U.S. policies in the region, on the other. Damage to such a balance carries the risk of regime collapse, leading to total chaos and anarchy at the door of Saudi Arabia, the world's top exporter of oil and at the gateway to one of the most strategic shipping lanes. From a tactical and military point of view, Yemen is a paradise for guerrilla warfare that hosts one of the most heavily armed populations on earth. For the majority of Yemenis, a Kalashnikov is as practical and very dear to the heart as a bicycle is to a Dutch person. Yemen is also a country where in some of its parts, even the presence of central government troops is perceived as an intrusion.

The terror, which Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula poses to western and regional interests, is much less damaging in capacity and scope than the danger associated with a civil war resulting from a direct U.S. militarized intervention in Yemen. The history of the post September 11 counterinsurgency makes it clear that it is impossible to win an insurgency through the use of military force alone. Neither the U.S., nor the Yemeni central government will be able to win the struggle against Al-Qaeda in Yemen without a clear and comprehensive strategy that focuses on human

security and on filling the power vacuum outside Yemen's urban centers. Furthermore, no national or foreign fighting force, or a combination of them, can achieve a successful counterinsurgency strategy unless the host government is viewed as legitimate by the majority of its people. The vast tribal areas of Yemen are the ideal environment for the protection and support of Al-Qaeda fighters, precisely because of the legitimacy crisis of the Yemeni state. The latter has failed to extend its authority and services throughout the country, coupled with a lack of improvement in the harsh daily lives for the majority of the Yemeni population. To disrupt, dismantle and defeat Al-Qaeda in Yemen, the U.S. and its western allies' counterinsurgency strategy should not only be about the number of Al-Qaeda fighters killed or arrested. Instead, it should be, above all, about building an effective Yemeni state that can control its national territory and deliver its citizens much craved for basic urban services, job opportunities, democratic participation, reconciliation at local level, and economic development. In dealing with Al-Qaeda in Yemen, a people-centered view of security, hence human security is essential for national, regional and international security.

To conclude my thesis, I wish to highlight how the discussions in this research reveal the complex overlappings in Yemen's socio-political life. The approach I have used in this research proved useful in dismantling such complex overlapping and in exposing the grey cells that fill the arena of state-society relations in Yemen. The Yemeni case demonstrates how in the 21st century Middle East there are political entities that continue to be a mixture of phases of tradition and modernity, without observable progression from one phase to another. Yemen has formed its own version of political modernization, which is neither modern nor traditional. Finally, I wish to conclude this research by noting that what we need in dealing, theoretically and practically, with the PPM in the Middle East are not grand theories, enormous ideas and

Meta narratives such as the modernization theory. Instead, what we need are ways of thinking that are responsive to contrasts, particularities, singularities and the plurality of state-society relations in the Middle East.

Notes

1 Development studies share the same time and place of birth as modernization research. President Truman's inauguration speech in 1949 is considered by a number of authors to be the big bang that launched development studies. See, for example, Escobar, A., (1995), Encountering Development, Princeton University Press; Schech, S. & Haggis, J. (2000), Culture and Development: A Critical Introduction, Blackwell Publishing.

[2] For a critique of Lerner's system character media approach, see, Roger, E. (1978) The Rise and Fall of the Dominant Paradigm, Journal of Communication, vol. 28, No1, Pp: 64-69.

[3] For a literature survey on 'resource curse', see for instance, Rooser, A. (2006), The Political Economy of the Resource Curse, IDS working Paper, April.

[4] The CAUS organized a major seminar on the topic. The discussions in the Seminar were published in 1992 in a book titled: *Al-Mujtama al-Madani fi Al-Watan Al-Arabi wa Daworoh fi Tahkeek al-Democratyah*, Civil Society in the Arab Homeland, and its Role in Achieving Democracy.

[5] The best example here is the response of Egyptian Islamists to the earthquake that hit Cairo in 1992. While the Egyptian government was paralyzed, Islamist organizations were in the streets providing medical help, shelter and food for the victims.

[6] Some analysts of state formation argue that the transformation from rural to urban life is accompanied by a change from a private provision of coercion based upon kin and community to a public provision of coercion by the state. For more on this point, see Bates, R., (2001), Prosperity and Violence: The Political Economy of Development, W.W. Norton & Company.

[7] The Zaydi sect is one of the first offshoots from Shi'i Islam. The sect emerged as a result of a dispute over the fifth imam, thus their other name of 'Fivers'. The sect represents, however, a compromise between the Sunni and Shia's forms of Islam. Interestingly, Zaydis are found only in Yemen. The cultural insularity and physical invulnerability of Yemen's mountainous bastions made this sect survive all these centuries despite Yemen's proximity to the place of birth of Sunni Islam.

[8] The PDRY leadership was accused of being behind the assassination of President al-Ghashmi of North Yemen. An exploding briefcase brought from South Yemen on June 24, 1978, which allegedly contained a message from Salem Robea Ali of South Yemen, killed him.

[9] The other four countries are Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Oman.

[10] The Ibadi sect is the only surviving remnant of the early Khariji's movement, which was, historically, the first anti-mainstream Islam movement. What survives today in

Oman is the moderate version of the movement. Similar to the offshoot of Zaydism in Yemen, the sect is characterized by a democratic process of selection of imams and religious leaders of the community.

[11] The plural of Sayyid is Sadah, who comprised a ruling aristocracy during the imamate period in North Yemen.

[12] The Shafi school of thought is one of the four schools of religious law, or *fiqh*, within Sunni Islam. The other three schools are Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali.

[13] The Tanzimat project began under Sultan Mahmud II (ruled from 1808-1839).

[14] Mocah is named for a Yemeni coastal town, which used to be the major marketplace for coffee. Coffee plantations in South America, the Caribbean region and Africa brought the price of coffee down sharply and shifted coffee trade away from Yemen.

[15] Zaydis differ from other offshoots of Shi'ism by their recognition of Zayd Ibn Zeen al-Abidin (the grandson of Husayn) as the fifth imam, in succession to the Prophet.

[16] Two of the best available works on the families of the Sayyids are by Gariele Vom Bruck: her 2005 book on "Islam, Memory, and Morality in Yemen", and her 2004 "Evacuating Memory in Post revolutionary Yemen", a chapter in Al-Rasheed, M & Vitalis, R. (eds.) (2004) Counter-Narratives, History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Palgrave MacMillan, pp.229-245.

[17] During my field research in Yemen, I had the opportunity to meet a current Minister from the Iryani family and a deputy Minister from Al Arshi family.

[18] Up until the defeat of Southern regime in the 1994 civil war, there were eight cinema halls in Aden. These were located in Crater, Khourmakser, Al-Tawahi, Al-Mansourah, Sheikh Othman and Al-Mua'ala.

[19] Imam al-Badr was just one week in power as the imam of Yemen. His father, Imam Ahmed died of natural causes on the 19th of September 1962.

[20] Egyptian troops, however, were pulled out of Yemen in 1967, following the crushing defeat of Egypt in the six days war. The withdrawal of the Egyptian forces led to the overthrow of al-Sallal, the first Yemeni President.

[21] For a good analysis of the Yemeni civil war, see Witty, D. (2001), A Regular Army in Counterinsurgency Operations: Egypt in North Yemen; Badeeb, S. (1986), The Saudi-Egyptian Conflict over North Yemen, Westview Press; Rawzi, M., (1983), *Harb al-Thalath Sanawat*, 1967-1970(The Three Years War, 1967-1970), Dar al-Wahda. Rahmy, A., (1983), The Egyptian Policy in the Arab World: Intervention in Yemen:1962-1967, a Case Study, University Press of America; Al-Hadidi, S., (1984), In Arabic, *Shahid ala Harb al-Yemen*(Witness to the Yemeni War), Maktabat Madbuli; Ahmed, Y.(1981), In Arabic, *Al Dawor al Masri fi al Yaman:1962-67(*The Egyptian Role in Yemen:1962-67), The Egyptian General Authority for Books, Cairo.

[22] It is estimated that by 1964, more than 40,000 Egyptian troops were stationed in Yemen. See Pelletiere, S., (1996), Yemen and Stability in the Persian Gulf: Confronting the Threat from Within, a Report published on the 22nd of May 1996 by the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College.

[23] The waning of Nasser took place as a result of the break up of the UAR, which resulted in indicating the failure of his popular pan Arabism project.

[24] Yemenis were given preferential treatment in the Saudi labor market - no visa and no Saudi sponsorship (*kafalah*). It is estimated that by the 1980s there were 1.8 million Yemenis working mainly in Saudi Arabia and to a lesser extent in Kuwait. Remittances were the main source of foreign exchange for Yemen; in the early 1980s remittances reached its peak of $1.7 billion. For more on this point, see, for instance, Van Hear, N, (1994), The Socio-economic Impact of the Involuntary Mass Return to Yemen in 1990, Journal of Refugee Studies Vol.7, No.1, 1994. Pp: 19-38.

[25] President al-Iryani was ousted and exiled in June 1974.

[26] Quoted in Halliday, F. (2002), Revolution and Foreign Policy: The Case of south Yemen, 1967-1987, Cambridge University Press.

[27] For a very good recent coverage of the end of the British Imperial rule in Aden, see Hinchcliffe, Ducker &Holt (2006), Without Glory in Arabia: The British Retreat from Aden, I.B. Tauris

[28] The YSP was founded in 1978 as a replacement of the 1963 established NLF. It had a membership of 26,000, out of which 20% are army personnel, 15% are laborers and the rest are peasants, party officials and intellectuals.

[29] Hadramawt is the province where the tribe of the Bin Laden family is rooted. The family's origins are in the village of al-Rubat, Kindah tribes.

[30] For instance, the lowest wage for a worker in a factory was 25 Yemeni Dinar (YD) a month, the highest was 75. Also, state control of housing resulted in keeping the rent at a low level and thus contributing to income equality.

[31] For an overview of cooperatives see Halliday, F., (1990), Revolution and Foreign Policy: The case of South Yemen, 1967-1987, Cambridge University Press; Carapico, S., (1993), The Economic Dimension of Yemeni Unity, Middle East Report, No.184, pp: 9-14.

[32] The regime in North Yemen had also in mind the petroleum facilities in Aden, the BP refinery and the port facilities.

[33] For indicators of poverty and underdevelopment in Yemen, see the UNDP Human Development Index (1992, 1995, 2000 and 2005).

[34] See International Labour Office (1991), Migrant Workers affected by the Gulf Crisis, Report of the Director-General Third Supplementary Report, GB.249/15/7, ILO-Geneva, Januaray, 1991.

[35] Nearly two thirds of cultivated areas in the PDRY were classified as cooperatives. By contrast, the YAR nationalized only the proprieties of the Imam.

[36] According to Hudson (1995), such frustrations were already there before the war: "YSP ministers found that the real decisions in their ministries were being taken by the GPC directors-general. There were not enough YSP or Southern civil servants at lower levels in the ministries in Sana'a to prevent the more numerous northern bureaucrats from dominating them", See Hudson In al-Suwaidi, J, (1995), Ed., The Yemeni War of 1994, Saqi Books. Pp: 24-25.

[37] Patricia Crone's work "The Tribe and the State' in J.A Hall, ed., States in History (1986, Oxford) is a good reflection of the evolutionary approach in studying the Middle Eastern tribes.

[38] For a good critique of the metaphor and the approach see Layne, L, (1994), Home and Homeland: The Dialogics of Tribal and National Identities in Jordan, Princeton University Press.

[39] The Iranian case of Beck, L. in Khoury & Kostiner (1990) provides interesting evidence on this point.

[40] For an excellent panorama of anthropological approaches in defining and studying the Middle Eastern 'tribe' see Eickelman, D., (2002), The Middle East and Central Asia: An Anthropological Approach, 4th ed., Prentice Hall.

[41] In 1916 Idris was appointed as the leader of the Sanusi Sufi order that was founded in 1843 in Cyrenaica. The Libyan monarchy had been founded by Al-Sanusi, a Muslim saint, and it was therefore a theocracy.

[42] At the end of WWII, the Allied powers transferred the decision on the political destiny of Libya to the UN, which endorsed the creation of Libya as an independent state.

[43] Qaddafi was born in a Bedouin tent in the desert about 20 miles south of Sirte. His parents were herders of camels and goats in the non-prestigious tribe of Qathathfa. Similarly, the colleagues of the revolution have their roots in non-influential tribes. It's worth noting that size, wealth and origin in the Arabian Peninsula mark the distinction within the hierarchy of Libyan tribes.

[44] The research conducted by the Libyan-based Arab Institute for development has covered seven villages in the province of Zavia. Fifty-five percent of the sample was made of males under the age of 42 and eighty nine percent of the sample were married.

[45] For further information on the regime's positions filled by Qathathfa, Warfala and Maghrha tribes, see Blac, C., (2000), Deterring Libya: The Strategic Culture of Muammar Qaddafi, USAF Counter proliferation papers, Retrieved online on the 26th of May 2007: http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/cpc-pubs/black.htm.

[46] A very good scholarly coverage of Qasim's period can be found in Hanna Batatu (1981), The Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movements in Iraq, Princeton University Press.

[47] Ba'ath booklet, In Arabic, *Alif Ba al Ba'ath* (1970), ABC Ba'ath.

[48] Ali Abdullah Salih, Interview with the President, in Arabic, Al-Majalla Weekly, no.347, 1-7 October 1986.

[49] Sheikh Abduallah Al Ahmar died on the 29th of December 2007, at a hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

[50] The province of Sa'ada rose up against the Sanaa government some years ago and reportedly called for the establishment of an orthodox *Shi'a* state. The leader of this revolt, the clergyman Husein al-Huthi, was killed in 2004 and, in a secret deal with the government, some of his followers agreed to go into exile. Recently, however, some Al Huthi followers initiated fights with security and armed forces.

[51] A mountainous area located on the western edge of Yemen's highlands, overlooking the coastal plain of Tuhama.

[52] An interview with sheikh Mohsen bin Meeli, Al-Nedaal, 28.2.1993, Pp: 3-4.

[53] Etymologically, *Ahzab* in Arabic means clans, coalition, and confederates or combined forces. The 33rd sura of the Qur'an is named *al Ahzab*; it describes the coalition of tribes in the so-called 'Battle of the Ditch' against Muslims of Medina in the year 627.

[54] The first scholarly work on parties in the region was the 1994 work of Tachau, F. "Political Parties of the Middle East and North Africa", Greenwood Press.

[55] Theoretically, however, demarcating the boundaries between political parties, civil society organizations and new social movements is hard to maintain.

[56] Today's Arab political parties are estimated to be five hundred.

[57] By infrastructure I refer mainly to educational and communication facilities. Political climate, on the other hand, refers to the British controlled toleration of partisan and union work.

[58] One of the excellent accounts on Hizb al-Ahrar is provided by Al-Zefani, A., (1999), In Arabic, *al-Etegah al-Qawmi fi Harakat al-Ahrar al-Yamanieen: 1918-1948*, The pan Arabism Trends in The Yemeni Ahrar Movement, *(1918-1948), the* Yemeni Centre for Research and Study, and the French Institute for Yemani Studies-San'a.

[59] A good historical account of political parties in Yemen is provided by Al-Genahi, S., (1997), In Arabic, *al-Harakah al-Wataniyah al-Yamaniyah min al-Thawra ela al-Wehda,* the National Movement in Yemen from the revolution to the unification, Markaz al-Amal for Studies and Publication.

[60] An interview with President Abdullah al Salal published on the 10th of May 1967, Al-anwar newspaper, P.1.

[61] An interview with President Ibrahim al-Hamdi, published on March 1975, Adhwaa al-Yemen Magazine, P.8.

[62] An interview with President Ali Abdullah Salih published on the 6th of June 1985, Al-Sahwah Newspaper, P. 4.

[63] The two countries share also the reality of being weak states governing fragmented societies. In the case of Lebanon, such fragmentation is sectarian in nature, whilst in Yemen it is tribal in nature.

[64] For more on radical opposition groups in Yemen, see Halliday, F. (1985), The Arabian Peninsula Opposition Movements, MERIP, No.130, The Contest for Arabia, Feb. 1985, Pp: 13-15.

[65] Wahhabism was introduced by returning Yemeni fighters from Afghanistan and by students of religion in Saudi Arabia who disseminated their doctrine via Wahhabi institutions and mosques funded by the Saudi government. For more on this point, see Weir, S., (1997), A Clash of Fundamentalism: Wahhabism in Yemen, Middle East Report, No.204, July-September 1997.

[66] Article 39, the Constitution of the Republic of Yemen, May 1991.

[67] The freedom of expression guaranteed by Law no.25 (1990) resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of partisan and non-governmental newspapers in unified Yemen. In just a few months after issuing the law, more than 100 newspapers emerged. Many of them were very critical of the government and the president. Ten years later, the number of newspapers has reached the two hundreds. Magazines, on the other hand, have only reached sixty-eight in number. For more on this, see The General Guide for Yemeni Newspapers and Magazines (2001), Yemen's Ministry of Information, Centre for Media and Documentation, Pp: 1-18.

[68] Today, the number of leftist parties in Yemen has reached eighteen. For a list of these parties, see Leftist Parties of the World at http://www.broadleft.org/ye.htm.

[69] A good view on the two local council elections is provided by Longley, A. (2007), The High Water Mark of Islamist Politics? The Case of Yemen, The Middle East Journal, Spring 2007. An excellent analysis of the presidential elections is provided in the Yemeni Strategic Report of 2006, published by the Yemeni Centre for Strategic Studies. For good media coverage of the 2006 presidential election, see the BBC news online, on the 20 September 2006: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5362592.stm.

[70] An excellent overview of the preparations for the elections is provided by Detalle, R. & Hilterman, J. (1993), The Yemeni Elections Up Close, Middle East Report, No.185, Nov- Dec. 1993, Pp: 8-12.

[71] The number of such schools is estimated to be 4000. Wahhabi thought dominates the educational curriculum of many of these schools.

[72] For instance, the replacement of the Presidential Council, which was comprised of five members elected by the parliament, by the Consultative Council (Majlis al Shura), whose 59 members (increased later to 111) are appointed by the president.

[73] The YSP decision to boycott was not approved by many leading members inside the party. As a result, forty-five YSP members participated in the elections as independent candidates.

[74] The dissolving must pave the way for new elections within sixty days. The parliament cannot be dissolved twice, however, for the same reason.

[75] Ahmed is under forty years old and is currently the commander of both the Yemeni Republican Guard and the anti-terror Special Task Forces.

[76] Yemen Strategic Report (2006), In Arabic, published by Yemen Center for Strategic Studies, P.31.

[77] See Yemen UNDP-HDI for the year 2007.

[78] For a good panoramic view of the 1994 defeat of South Yemen, see Hurd, R. & Noakes, G. (1994), North and South Yemen: Lead-up to the Break-up, Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, July/August, 1994, P.48.

[79] Jarullah was assassinated on the 28th of December 2002. He was credited as a force for Yemen's unification and a democracy activist. For an excellent analysis of his political career and assassination, see Carapico, Weeden and Wuerth (2002), the Death and Life of Jarallah Omar, Middle East Report.

[80] By regional standards, Yemen's political parties experience has provided two unique models in this respect - the Islah's move from the opposition to government and then back to opposition and the YSP's move from being in government to being in the opposition.

[81] For a good view on Salih's tactics in dismantling opposition coalition, see Burrows, R. & Kasper, C. (2007), The Salih Regime and the Need for a Credible Opposition, The Middle East Journal, Spring 2007, Pp: 263-280.

[82] USIP report titled "Engaging Islamists and Promoting Democracy". Accessed online on the 20th of May, 2008: http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr190.pdf

[83] At the time of conducting the two major elections of 1993 and 1997, illiteracy rates among tribeswomen was estimated to be more than 75%.

[84] For instance, the call of Sfakianakis, J. & Sayigh, Y. (2003), Workshop No.12, The Role of the Military in Politics and Economics of the Middle East, 44th Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting, Florence, 19-23 March.

[85] For a good political biography of Nasser, see for instance, Stephens, R. (1971), Nasser: A Political Biography, Allen Lane; Aburish, S. (2004), Nasser: The Last Arab, St. Martin's Press/Thomas Dunne Books.

[86] On this point, see for instance, Patrick Seale (1986), The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945-1958, Yale University Press.

[87] Nasser Speech in Port Said, on the 22nd of December 1962.

[88] A statement made by Salih during a talk between him and Abd Malik al Mutawakel. The latter revealed it to me in an interview that I conducted with him in his residence in Sana'a, on the 10th of June 2008.

[89] A third short-lived phase of military reform took place when Imam Ahmed left Yemen, in April 1959, to go for medical treatment in Italy, and left his son, Imam al-Badr in charge. Al-Badar's attempts at reforms were very short lived and brought further Imamate-military-tribal tensions.

[90] Military equipment to the YAR was channeled through the Saudis. In 1974, for instance, the Saudis forwarded to the US the YAR's list of new weapon requirements. In these dealings, the Saudis have often played political football, mostly in the form of delaying either the payments or the delivery.

[91] The NLF was transformed into the Yemeni Socialist Party, the YSP.

[92] See the Website of Al Ahmar Group at: http://alsalamest.com/Ahmar_profile.pdf.

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